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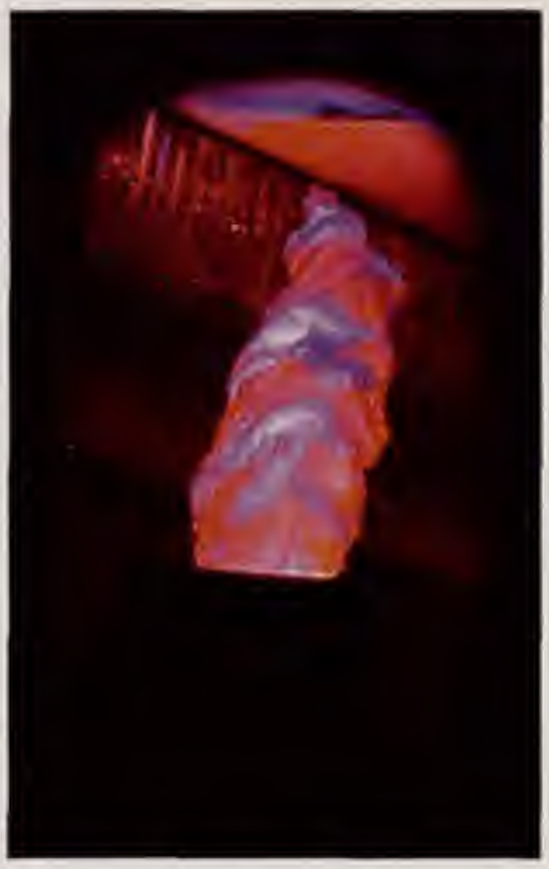

What gets you going? I mean what moves you and inspires you and takes you to a different, better place? In this issue of *Mobile Beat*, we feature a number of ways to answer this question.

In the heat of competition for your community's entertainment dollars, you may sometimes need a shot of inspiration to make your performances pull out in front of the pack. We have just the thing: Virtual Reality Parties. *Mobile Beat's* editorial staff put its combined brainpower to work to come up with some great new ideas you can try as you put together cutting-edge themed parties.

Maybe rubbing shoulders with your fellow entertainers, absorbing information from experienced teachers, and being dazzled by the latest in DJ technology is what gets your motor running. If that's the case, then no doubt you've attended or planned to attend a Mobile Beat DJ Show at some point. Attendees at the Summer Show in Chicago got a chance to fire up their entertainment engines with seminars, exhibits, parties and more.

In a more literal sense, being a Mobile DJ is all about moving—getting the gear to the hall and people to the dance floor. We talk a lot about the latter throughout the year, but when fall rolls around, it's time to take a look at the actual vehicles on the market that make sense for moving your show from point A to point B. Check out the photos of attractive DJ rigs too.

Remember: we're here to give you the fuel you need to keep your DJ business engine running on all four and your passion for performance burning.

Dan Walsh,
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Feedback

Dear Mobile Beat,

In the most recent issue of Mobile Beat (July 2002), you included an article titled "Taking Aim with Direct Mail." After reading the twenty-one ways, I was quite curious about #11 in the article. A lot of DJs these days offer "satisfaction guaranteed" in their advertising/promotional tools, but I would look at this cautiously considering the different types of potential customers a DJ might run into. In our markets, we would be "eaten alive" if we were to put something like this in our brochures or fliers. Customers are always looking for a bargain, so if one little thing goes wrong, such as not playing one request from the audience, this might result in forfeit of payment the night of the show.

"Satisfaction guaranteed" is being used too loosely in the mobile entertainment business. There are customers out there that will book on the sole basis that if they are not "fully satisfied" (they won't be) they'll get their entertainment for free! To have a satisfaction guarantee that works, a DJ would need to have criteria of what went wrong and why (possibly a checklist). However, this type of procedure defeats the purpose of having a guarantee, if the customer has to prove why they were unhappy with the show in the first place!

Sincerely,
Brian "Groovy Boy" Kelm, owner
Boomin' Beats, Reeseville, WI

Dear Mobile Beat,

When will we be taken seriously as an industry?

I was in a room full of the leading professional disc jockey entertainers here in my market of Vancouver, British Columbia and this question was brought up. The consensus was that once you can prove to a client that you are a professional, regardless of your experience and regardless of what kind of equipment you use, you are generally taken seriously.

It was a meeting to discuss forming a local association and I would encourage every DJ in every market to do so by either contacting the A.D.J.A. (American Disc Jockey Association) or the C.D.J.A. (Canadian Disc Jockey Association). It's a valuable thing to do, as you will gain insight from the leaders in your market. True leaders always seem to emerge when something as important as the progression of professionalism in your market is discussed and strived for.

In contrast, I feel that a downfall of our industry is the segment of DJs who have realized that 90% of their clients will never have to hire them again. They are OK with this because they know that the majority of their clients are going to be wedding clients and therefore will not generate repeat business. (So they would think anyway; the majority of these kinds of DJs are young and/or inexperienced and don't understand the concept of referrals.) There is always going to be a market for those DJs who choose to go after clients who don't care about their events and are just looking for an "organic jukebox."

Ladies and gentlemen of the DJ industry, I implore you to cease and desist from referring to yourselves as "professional" unless you are truly offering a professional service. I feel that until this happens, we will not be taken seriously as a professional industry. It sounds great in theory doesn't it?

"Educate the clients" is what I keep hearing, and although I agree with this statement 100%, we live in an age of "the best deal" or "the cheapest way out". A lot of DJs have capitalized on this and do everything they can to get the jobs. They choose to work harder instead of smarter and they gain a sense of accomplishment from doing volume instead of quality. It's the old qualitative vs. quantitative issue that anyone with any common sense would understand.

Many of us have worried so much about trying to justify our worth to other DJs. Trying to convey to them that we are worth more than we have been charging and fighting with them about it is just a waste of energy, especially when they are happy getting what they think is all they can get in their respective markets. Yet, time and time again they have been proven wrong.

If we can focus our energies together with positive, like-minded individuals who want nothing but progression in the industry, then quite possibly we will achieve the respect I feel that we, as professional entertainers, deserve.

I would like to issue a challenge. Contact your previous clients and ask them if they would refer you or use you again for an important celebration. If you think that they may not want to tell you the truth, have someone else who you trust make the calls. The results may frighten you.

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Bag End Sales Chief Has Mobile Background

Bag End Loudspeaker Systems has appointed John Marcopulos as national sales manager. "John brings us the best of two worlds," says Bag End President James P. Wischmeyer. "He has extensive experience as a user of Bag End products and he has an impressive background in sales. We feel really fortunate that he is bringing his knowledge and enthusiasm to Bag End."

Marcopulos, a native of the Chicago area, has more than 25 years experience in both sales and sound. Prior to joining Bag End, he was a direct sales consultant with IBM, creating new dealers for the Fortune 500 company. He entered the entertainment business 15 years ago as a weekend radio jock. "But I traded the radio studio for the excitement of a live audience as a house DJ in a premier Tampa Bay sports club," he says.

At the same time, Marcopulos was honing his sales skills. He held sales positions with IBM, Epson and other well-known information technology firms. He also created his own mobile entertainment company more than 10 years ago.

While coordinating hundreds of events annually, he still takes the time to make each party special. And over his decade of providing sound, he became a fan of Bag End loudspeaker systems. "The Bag End speakers create the deep bass and clean highs that bring continual compliments for the quality of my sound."

Stanton's Dual Decks Sail on Dual Decks

The nightclub Jesters, on the ship Adventure of the Seas. Dungeon will follow the same model.

When Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines' fourth Voyager series ship, Navigator of the Seas, sets sail towards the end of the year, guests in its Dungeon nightclub will enjoy music delivered by Stanton's S-650 dual CD player and VRM-10 mixer.

The equipment upgrade was specified by RCCL's technical specialist, Christopher Vlassopulos, in keeping with the luxury of the 144,000-ton vessel, which also features a rock-climbing wall, basketball court, ice-skating rink, theatre, casino, mini-golf course and three-story dining room. "I wanted to make the change to Stanton because we have a wonderful facility that is really appreciated by our guests—especially the music," he said.

The S-650 offers 20 second anti-shock per side and digital output. "We changed from our previous dual CD players because we knew the Stantons would work well, and being based close to us in Fort Lauderdale, we knew we could get fast service." The same went for the four-channel VRM-10 mixer, which features eight line and four phono inputs, a valve preamp, a built-in filter, and high-quality faders.

The club, which is full to capacity most nights, spans two decks and is themed on an old castle, with gothic arches, gargoyles, and back-lit stained glass windows.

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Also, throughout the year (ending in July 2003), visitors who register at www.akgusa.com will have the chance to win one of two D 880 microphones or three posters that AKG is giving away every week. Everyone who registers will receive a free AKG sticker.

It's Hot—Be Careful!

D.F. "Buddy" Harris, a DJ and firefighter in Jacksonville, Florida (Professional DJ Services) brought to our attention some imprecise information on page 18 of *Mobile Beat* #75, September 2002. In the "It's Hot" item about Colorado Sound 'N' Light's new Air Canon, we inadvertently used the symbol O_2 instead of the word "air." Mr. Harris pointed out that using pure oxygen (O_2), which is highly flammable, rather than regular compressed air in this special effect would be extremely dangerous. We apologize for any confusion this might have caused, and encourage you to always read your manuals thoroughly before operating any equipment.

To find out more about the CSL's Air Canon, which eliminates the need for CO2 cartridges, as well as other innovative lighting, support and computer products, surf to www.csnl.com

$6000 to Celebrate 10

On July 8, 2002 Promo Only, Inc. announced the winners of its 10th Anniversary drawing. Prizes ranged from designer Promo Only apparel and accessories to free subscriptions to the CD or DVD series of the winner's choice. Finalists were also able to enjoy Promo Only's newest offering, a 2-CD collection of dining and cocktail music dubbed *The Background Essentials*.

The event's Grand Prize—a complete Pioneer Pro DJ system valued at just over $2000—was awarded to DJ Alan Au of Reseda, California.

Director of operations John DiSalvo, speaking about the unprecedented number of entries, said, "Quite frankly, we were caught somewhere between delight and shock. The response was terrific, and we're very gratified to have had this opportunity to let our subscribers know how much we appreciate their support through the years."

"Some great folks won some great prizes," concluded company director, Jim Robinson. "And they deserve them. Our subscribers are the best! Here's to ten more years!"

For a complete list of all winners in all categories, or to find out more about Promo Only, visit www.promoonly.com.

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it's HOT

Sleek and Sharp

Chauvet Lighting has introduced two exciting new effects, the **CH-205C Chrome-A-Zone** and the **LGG-3100X Lazer Scan.** An updated, chrome-finished version of the popular Tunnel Star, the Chrome-A-Zone is a dual-dish unit, combining dichroic colored moonflower and tunnel effects. Weighing 7.8 lbs. and measuring 10" x 4.5" x 5.5", it fits right in with Chauvet's Compact DJ Series™. MSRP: $99.99

The Lazer Scan is basically a programmable laser effect housed in a scanner case. This 4-channel DMX unit features a 5mW green laser, 24 2-D and 24 3-D patterns, and a laser sky effect. It can pan 180° and tilt 90°. At 18" long and only 8 lbs., it's definitely a mobile luminaire. MSRP: $899.99

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3000 N. 29th Court
Hollywood, FL 33020
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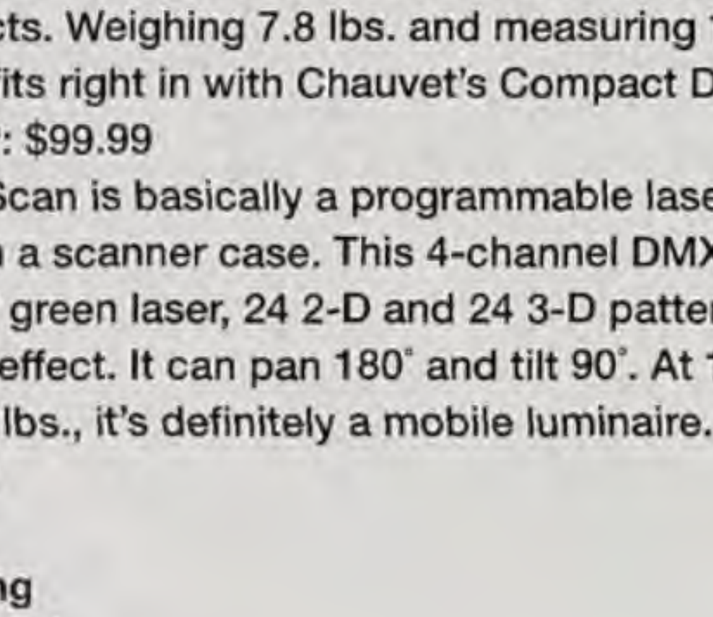
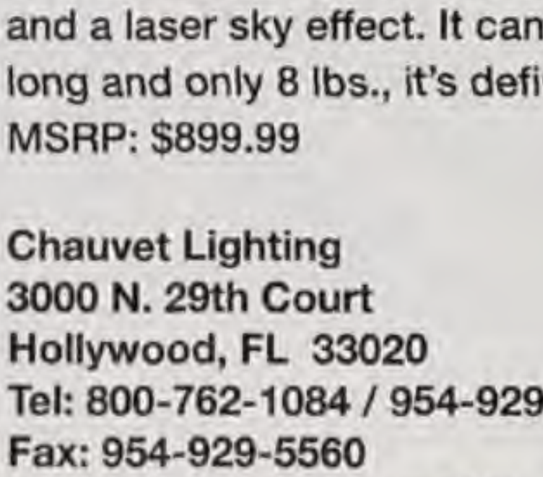


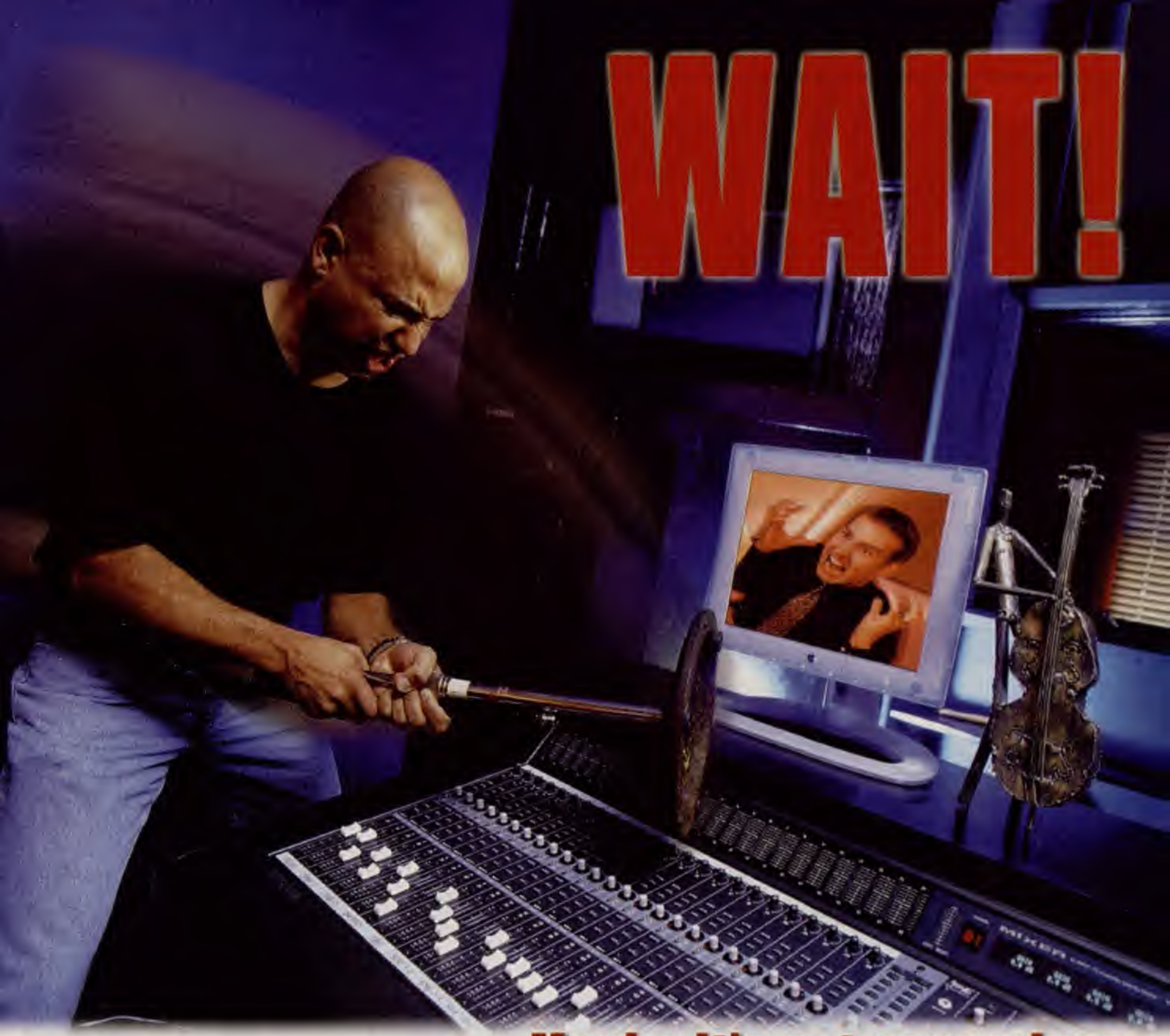


Crazed and Focused

Designed by three-time World DMC champion DJ Craze, **Stanton Magnetics'** new **SA-12** mixer incorporates a series of removable and interchangeable effect modules—Pitch Shifter, Flanger, and Delay—all with parameter and mix controls. This library of effects will be extended in the future. A three-position cue select switch, Penny & Giles (P&G) faders with curve adjustment, and a Program Reverse control are just some of the unique features of the SA-12. Inputs include 2 line, 2 phono, and 1 mic/line (switchable), with 3-band EQ, gain, and pan controls per channel. MSRP: $599

Stanton's **SA-8** is a signature mixer from DJ Focus, encompassing production console and live performance elements. It features individual Rec/FX and Direct outputs, so that each signal can be sent separately though the four direct outputs located at the rear of the mixer. P&G faders, an adjustable Rumble Filter, which allows the DJ to eliminate (or add) low end frequencies, an OS2 Optical Switch, and a host of inputs and outputs will help you focus on creativity. MSRP: $699

Stanton Magnetics
3000 SW 42nd Street
Hollywood, FL 33020
Tel: 954-689-8833
Fax: 954-689-8460
www.stantonmagnetics.com



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it's HOT

1, 2, 3...Mix!

Responding to design suggestions from hundreds of DJs, **Behringer** has come out with three new VMX series mixers, the **VMX100, VMX200** and **VMX300.** The three compact consoles feature new VCA-controlled Ultraglide faders (VMX200/300) and effective, easy-to-use BPM counters with time and beat sync displays. The two larger mixers additionally sport a great-sounding QRS 3-D surround effect.

The top-of-the-line VMX300 offers 3 dual-input channels, each with gain control, a 3-band EQ (32 dB attenuation), a PFL button and a fader curve control switch. The master section provides two separately controllable main out sections. MSRP: $299.99

The VMX200 offers many of the same features, but in a more compact package. In addition to its two dual-input stereo channels with gain control and 3-band EQ, it sports a dedicated mic channel with a 2-band EQ and auto-talkover function. MSRP: $199.99

The VMX100 features a ULN mic input, 2-band kills, main and tape outs and an assignable LED level meter. MSRP: $149.99

The ultra low-noise design of all three mixers is supported by gold-plated RCA connectors. Rugged construction qualifies them for Mobile DJ use as well as dance club set-ups.

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it's HOT

The Gobo Story Continues

The new **Saga** effect from **American DJ** is a sound-activated moonflower effect that's loaded with 18 gobos/color combinations. It produces moonflower beams that rotate back and forth as the gobos continuously change, covering a wide area. The Saga features two FX switches for changing between sound activation and continuous rotation modes, one for the gobo/color wheel and the other for the rotating mirror dish. This allows for a number of different effect combinations. The unit weighs only 10 lbs. and has dimensions of 8.75" x 8" x 4.75". A ZB-EFP 12-volt, 100-watt lamp is included with the unit. MSRP: $119.99

American DJ
4295 Charter Street
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Tel: 800-322-6337
Fax: 323-582-2610
www.americandj.com

A Moving Vision

A moving-mirror fixture full of gobos, colors and other exciting effects, the **Vision 250 DMX Scanner** from **Elation Professional** serves as an affordable alternative to other moving-head, spot-type fixtures. In addition to Elation's signature colors and gobo patterns, the unit features an extra effects wheel that contains a rotating 3-facet prism, frost filter, 32K filter, 56K filter and UV filter. It provides 1 motorized color wheel and 11 dichroic color filters (plus white) and 1 motorized gobo wheel with 6 interchangeable gobos. A double condenser lens system with motorized focusing allows for the creation of ultra-sharp, vibrant images. Along with full DMX functionality, the Vision 250 includes all the features you'd expect from a high-end luminaire. MSRP: $2,199.95

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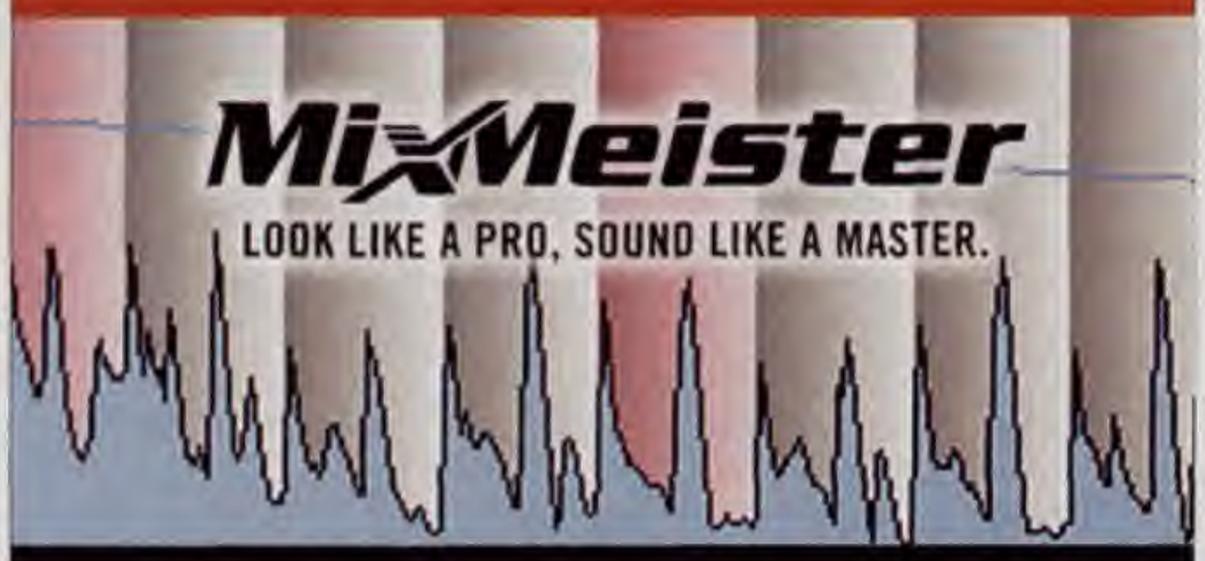

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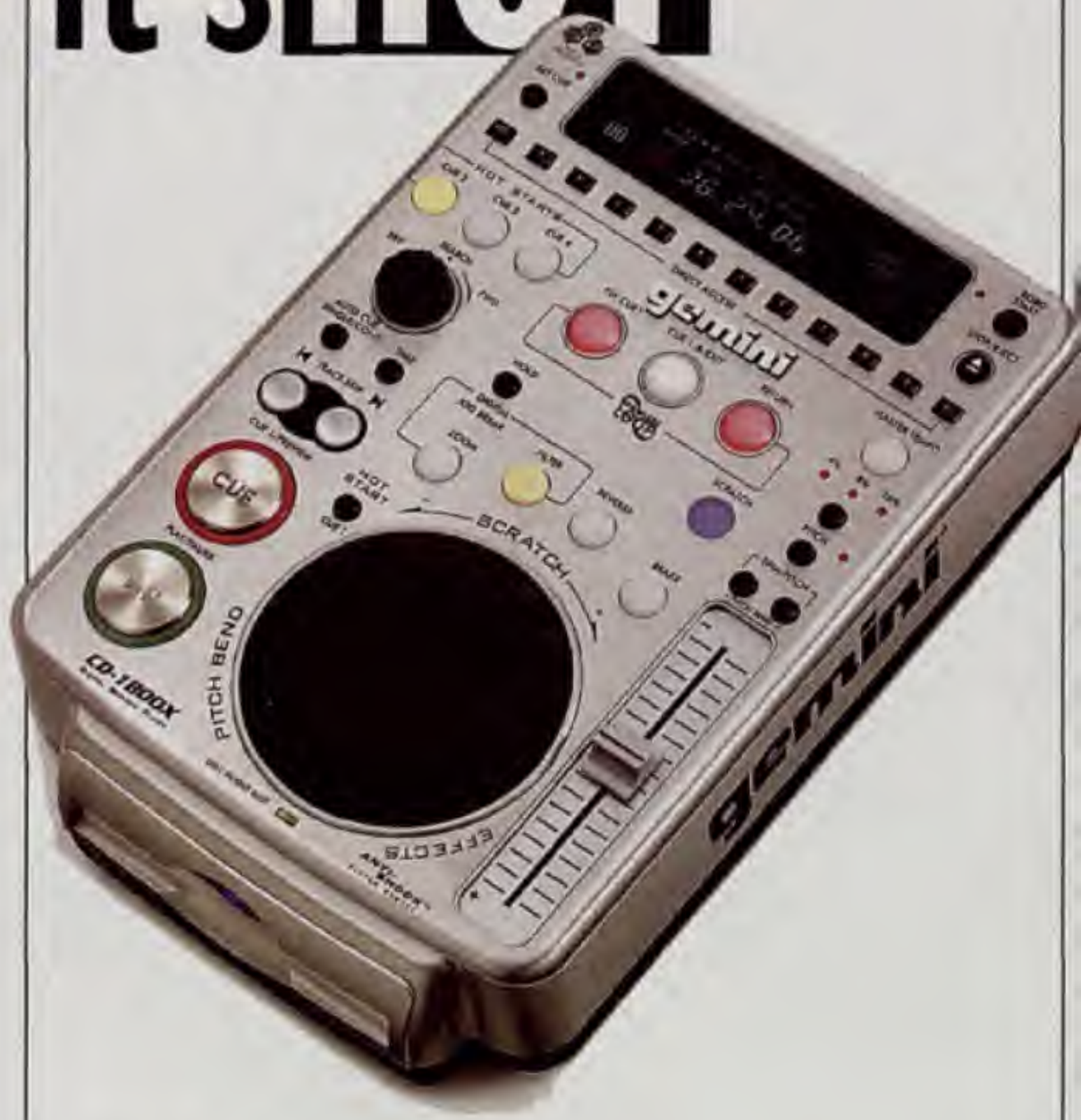

Digital Frontman

The **CD-1800X Pro CD Player/Digital Turntable** from **Gemini** brings you advanced Digital Signal Processing in a single-player package. DSP effects include Zoom, Reverse, Filter, and Brake. In addition, Real-Time Interactive Scratching gives you complete vinyl-like control over your material. Other notable functions include 4 instant-start "Hot Key" cue buttons, a seamless loop function, and digital output, which lets you capture the data stream directly to a CD burner or computer sound card. The CD-1800X also offers master tempo control, allowing for more extreme BPM variations while preserving the key of your program. Pitch control ranges are ± 4, 8, and 16%. Anti-Shock, Robo Start, direct track access, and single/continuous play modes round out this CDP's familiar features. MSRP: $699.

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The Screen Star and the Power Broker

Audio2000'S® will be rolling out the **AKJ7075** digital karaoke mixing amplifier with on screen display (OSD) at the 2002 Summer NAMM convention, July 19 - 21, 2002. The system will be on the market in August 2002. The AKJ7075 is made up of a karaoke mixer featuring digital key and echo controls, a remote control, and a 600W amplifier. The built-in OSD feature allows the users and the audience to be able to visualize and anticipate the digital sound effects being applied to the system. This system is intended for a variety of entertainment situations, including everything from small parties to karaoke clubs. MSRP: $578

For a complete karaoke solution, Audio2000'S will also be introducing the Singer's Power I ™ all-in-one portable, self-powered karaoke system. The system contains a DVD/CDG/MP3/CDR/VCD/SVCD/CD player, a karaoke mixing amplifier, a stereo speaker pair and a rugged retractable dolly. The karaoke-mixing amplifier features a built-in 200W amplifier, three microphone inputs, four audio inputs, four video inputs, two pre-amp outputs, digital key controls, and digital echo controls. MSRP: $870

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Recipe for Party Pleasure

Peavey's Club Mix provides a powerful performance concoction

By Jim Kerins

For many years, major manufacturers have focused on band and P.A. gear and shunned building professional DJ equipment. Mixers, in particular, suffered from cheap construction and dubious quality. Then we saw a surge in the popularity of Mobile DJs, backed up by MTV's promotion of a new breed of musical talent. A bevy of high-profile mix-meisters dispensed with old-fashioned note-based instruments, and exploited the extreme possibility of bringing the turntable to the forefront. As a result, today's youth are captivated by the alluring sounds that they hear coming from the professionals. Now everyone wants to be a DJ.

Thus, the demand has increased for professional equipment, with the mixer leading the pack. And the latest mixer that the crew at One Mobile Beat Tower has served up for the patented Jammin' Jim abuse test comes from a major music gear manufacturer: Peavey Electronics Corp. It's called the Club Mix™.

What's my limit?

My biggest disappointment with most DJ mixers is the lack of features to make them adaptable to many possible mixing situations. A basic, traditional mixer usually has only one microphone input, and certainly has no ability to insert any external processors. Many mixers also lack true balanced outputs. Finally, inexpensive and even moderately priced units often feel cheap, and flimsy. I hate flimsy—I have a flimsy-phobia. Does the 19" Peavey Club Mix have the quality and features to make Jim a happy camper? Well bring it on Big Daddy, and we'll see.

Uncorked

Out of the box and onto the bench goes the mixer. I am pleasantly surprised: this beefy unit is housed in heavy-gauge steel, and it's black with white screen-printed graphics. Hooray! No hokey color scheme or goofy layout, just an immediately easy-to-navigate unit. Of course the LED meters do form a futuristic triangle shape, possibly conveying a pyramid of power. That image notwithstanding, everything else on the faceplate looks pretty cool. Other immediate positive impressions include a couple of great combination microphone (XLR \ 1/4 inch) inputs, plus a computer-style removable grounded power cord.

Ingredients

The Club Mix has all the features you need to cover any mobile or club situation you may encounter. This includes four channels with long throw faders that accept line level or phono sources, for a total of eight inputs. These channel strips feature a three-band EQ, plus Peavey's exclusive EQ control called PHAT, which the manual describes as boosting a "special" combination of high and low frequencies. Obviously a focus group was utilized to figure out what that special combination would be. Actually, this control does

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And if that wasn't enough, the DMP-555 comes bundled with Pioneer DJ Booth software, helping you manage your digital music on PC, giving you the power to download, mix and transfer tracks directly to the SD Card. For mixing and playback, the software simulates a set-up with two Pioneer CDJ players and a mixer, allowing users to benefit from unrivalled flexibility in mixing their favorite tracks and loops stored on their PC.

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add some pleasant tonal bigness to the output.

Other cool features include cue mode select, channel assignment, and EQ blend control. The unique cue mode select switch lets you hear what the effects on the cue and main signals sound like in the headphones before sending them to the mains. You can then mix the effect into the program with an effect blend control. The Club Mix's channel assignment function lets you send any channel to either side of the crossfader or directly to the house outputs. This is especially useful for creative mixologists who want to add outboard samplers, drum machines or keyboards into the mix. To save your ears from stealth sonic bombardment, you can use the EQ blend control to set the amount of EQ present in your headphones.

The board also has additional mini input and output jacks on the front panel to connect an outboard MP3 player. This facilitates working with all those perfectly legal MP3s you have ripped and burned. Yet another quick and easy way to interact with your digitally recorded material.

Input gain adjustment is provided, with signal overload lights to indicate clipping. (BTW, why do so many DJs love to run their mixers way into the red? I don't understand this. Let's all close our eyes and concentrate—green is good, yellow is okay, and red is bad. Red means stop. Red means distortion. Red will blow up your speakers and make people run for the exits in a very unsafe manner...)

Sorry. Moving on, there are two microphone inputs with professional balanced connectors, so your microphone doesn't sound thin (remember: thin is good for girls, bad for microphone tone.) Mic channels include a two-band EQ, a level control, and effects-send to incorporate an external processor. Other features include a replaceable crossfader with reverse switch, and crossfader taper adjustment.

The ability to add external processors makes this board very useful for shows that include karaoke. At a wedding ceremony, for instance, it would be able to accommodate a vocalist, and an instrument, for the ever-popular extra service upsell. Various zone and record outputs make this board versatile for recording and multiple speaker setups.

Behind the bar

The rear panel is often the place where corners are cut and quality sacrificed to improve the manufacturer's bottom line—but certainly not <u>your</u> bottom line. Gratefully, all of the Club Mix's connectors are high quality, with gold-tipped contact surfaces to offer less resistance and quieter operation. Many of them are manufactured by Neutrik, a world leader in professional audio components. Thus the Club Mix avoids the problem of crackly connections. Patching in components is a breeze, due to a clean, well-labeled design. The variety of in and out points should accommodate most situations you'll encounter.

Feeling euphoric

With any quality component, you get an instant feeling of satisfaction the moment you switch it on. That's the vibe the Club Mix gives off. I put it to the test at a recent wedding reception. I was charged with the usual DJ tasks, as well as a little bit of karaoke.

I patched two CD players, two mics, a tape deck, and an MP3 player into the mixer. I also added a reverb unit to aid the inevitably tone deaf karaoke singers. The mixer was quick to set up and adjust. Connecting the amplifier with professional cables to the mixer's balanced outputs made for a positive connection with low noise and high gain. Precisely adjusting CD volume levels was effortless with the long throw faders. The channel EQ points proved to be well chosen. And the PHAT EQ knob was much more than a novelty feature. It actually sounded great, adding just enough high-end to keep the vocals up in the mix, while keeping the low-end thick and thumpin'. The microphone channels were quiet and had plenty of gain. The vocal effects loop, a great addition to a DJ mixer, worked as advertised.

The party was a huge success, mostly because I know which cheesy songs to play in which order, and I have a great sound system, with which the easy-to-use Club Mix interfaced seamlessly. Having the ability to finely adjust the tone, combined with a responsive and uniform microphone section, made for an enjoyable work evening. This functional unit would be at home in any DJ's rack.

The Peavey Club Mix is available only at Peavey dealers. Check out the company's newly pumped-up Web site for one near you. The unit lists for $699 and comes with a year warranty. •

For questions, comments or for advice from a real psychic friend, e-mail Jammin Jim at jkerins@rochester.rr.com.

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A look at two self-powered speaker solutions for mobile gigs

Power Packed!

By Henry Collins

Self-powered speaker systems are becoming increasingly popular, with entries from nearly every speaker manufacturer on the market today. For this issue, we decided to narrow the field down to two recent product releases: American Audio's APX-152 and Gemini's XTR-400.

First up...the APX-152

At a quick glance, the APX-152 might easily pass as a knock-off of JBL's EON15 G2 or Mackie's SRM-450. Upon closer inspection (you need to put the beer can down to do this) you quickly realize some obvious cosmetic and design differences. Like its higher-priced competitors, the APX-152 is a molded plastic, pole-mountable, two-way speaker. Weighing in at 55 pounds (manufacturer's spec—my scale said 50 lbs.), the APX-152's rugged enclosure features a molded-in carrying handle, four rigging points for flying applications and permanent installation, plus a pole mount socket with locking screw. The speaker's rear panel hosts its built-in power amplifier and preamp mixer with mic and line level inputs.

The speaker's two-way design features a 15-inch woofer and 1-inch compression driver coupled to a molded-in exponential horn with 90 degrees of horizontal and 50 degrees of vertical dispersion. By way of comparison, Mackie's SRM-450's high frequency horn boasts 90x45 degree dispersion. The APX-152's cabinet also features recessed notches designed to line up with the feet of another APX-152 cabinet for use in stacking applications.

Serious versatility

The APX-152's amplifier panel quickly reveals that this speaker was designed to meet a wide variety of sound reinforcement applications, from Mobile DJ events to touring band gigs. For line level sources, the speaker features both XLR and 1/4-inch phone jack connections, along with a rotary level control for use with mixers, CD players, tape devices, keyboards, etc. There is also a 1/4-inch microphone jack and rotary level control for use with balanced or unbalanced mics, guitars or other low level input musical instruments. The APX-152 offers a parallel input feed via an XLR jack for connection to another APX-152 speaker.

Along with its impressive assortment of inputs and outputs, the APX-152's power amp also features separate bass, treble and master level controls. For protection from unwanted subsonic frequencies that can damage the bass driver, the APX-152 incorporates a low-cut filter switch. Other speaker protection features include amplifier power-on delay to mute out transient signals at power on and an easy access 5-amp GMA type fuse holder.

Sonic performance

I was not able to audition the APX-152 in a live sound situation as I did with Gemini's XTR-400. I did, however, conduct several closed room listening tests using a variety of music selections. On the high end, the output from the compression driver and horn combination was clean

and well defined, but I did find it a little "throaty" compared to the 6-inch dual piezo horns featured in Gemini's XTR-400 system. They did exhibit better "throw" than the piezo drivers, making them better suited for outdoor concert events. The 15-inch low-frequency driver delivered tight and "gutsy" bass output. I noticed an appreciable improvement in bass response when the speakers were placed on the floor due to improved floor coupling as compared to pole mounting.

At the checkout line

At $379.99 each, the APX-152 is a real value and a more affordable alternative to Mackie and JBL. Its compact

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size and optional carrying case (APX-B) with pullout handle and rollers make it an excellent choice for DJs and bands who live on the road.

Next up...the XTR-400

I got the system just in time to audition it at a homecoming event aboard the General Jackson, Opryland's famed banquet hall steamboat. Could Gemini's XTR-400 active speaker system placate a party-hungry crowd of 600 Fisk University alumni for two-hours? That was the challenge that awaited them.

An XTR-400 satellite speaker delivering a dose of crowd control at a Fisk University reunion aboard the General Jackson steamboat.

The XTR-400 is a bi-amplified speaker system featuring a separate tuned port bass cabinet with a single 15-inch driver and two full-range satellite speakers. Each pole-mountable satellite features a 10-inch woofer and 6-inch dual-piezo horn tweeter powered by the amplifier's two 85-watt satellite channels. The subwoofer channel delivers 230 watts of continuous output and about the same bass as two full-range cabinets with single 15-inch bass drivers. In fact, I thought the bass output overshadowed the satellites.

Unlike some powered speakers, the XTR-400's amplifier is completely external thus eliminating any sound coloration due to unwanted resonance from the amplifier module. For easy transport and handling, the bass cabinet features four swivel castors and two recessed carrying handles. Both satellite speakers can ride atop the bass cabinet and be rolled into position. The system comes with a luggage strap to secure the speakers during transport. I even managed to wrestle the 96-pound cabinet inside the back seat of my '97 Honda Civic without damaging the car's interior...or my back.

Meeting the challenge

Normally the DJ, Charles Scott, would use four Ross speakers to handle a crowd of this size. I reassured him that the XTR-400 system was a match for his vintage speakers with single 15-inch woofers. However, my confidence was shaken somewhat as we entered the boat's massive banquet hall.

Setting up the speaker system was a plug-and-play affair, requiring a pair of speaker cables with Neutrik Speakon connectors and output cables from the mixer with male XLR or 1/4-inch phone plug terminations. The speaker amp's parallel input connections let you daisychain multiple XTR-400 speaker systems to handle larger venues.

All of the sound equipment for the event was set up on a five-foot high stage which placed the satellite speakers at ear level and provided maximum throw. I positioned the satellites to cover the center of the dance floor with the Ross speakers located at the far corners. After adjusting for differences in speaker efficiencies and rolling off the highs, the Ross speakers were a little "edgy" on the high end. I cranked the system up for a sound check and the XTR-400 answered with thunderous bass and smooth full-range coverage over the center of the dance floor. Within 30 minutes the dance floor was packed.

My earlier concerns about the XTR-400's bass output overshadowing the satellite speakers disappeared into the packed dance floor crowd. The satellites held up quite well despite stiff competition from the Ross speakers. We finished off the night without a hitch. Two XTR-400 systems would have been perfect for this event, delivering a near lethal dose of dance floor excitement.

At the cash register

With a street price of about $699, the XTR-400 is an outstanding buy for any DJ looking for a highly portable and versatile active speaker system. With the satellites mounted on optional speaker stands, the XTR-400 can be configured to handle a wide variety of venues, large or small, as well as live music sound applications. •

Dynamic Duo from FBT

One of Europe's leading audio manufacturers for over 40 years, FBT has now trained its sights on the US market. Among its large product line, their MaxX series speakers are gaining increased popularity among DJs and musicians. Of particular note are the MaxX 4a and MaxX 9Sa powered speakers shown here. The MaxX 4a has a two-way speaker design featuring a 12-inch woofer and a high frequency compression driver and horn combination. The woofer and tweeter are powered by built-in 300- and 100-watt amplifiers. The MaxX 9Sa is a subwoofer featuring a 15-inch woofer and internal 900-watt power amplifier. Both the MaxX 4a and MaxX 9Sa feature shock-proof molded plastic enclosures. The MaxX 9Sa is fitted with a pole socket for satellite speaker stand mounting. Also available in non-powered versions, the MaxX 4a and MaxX 9Sa have a suggested retail price of $899.95 and $1,299.95, respectively.

Word of Warning

The amplifiers used in many of today's powered speakers don't feature the same thermal protection and current limiting safeguards found in concert-grade power amplifiers. For this reason, it is important to avoid overdriving powered speakers to prevent unscheduled shutdown and gross embarrassment during the "heat" of battle. Since there is no convenient way to provide supplemental forced-air cooling for powered speakers, especially when stand mounted, it is wise to avoid driving them at clipping levels for extended periods of time.

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B-52s Drop da (Bass) Bomb on da Party

By Anthony B. Barthel

Powered subs meet the power challenge

In the heart of East LA, I was touring the B-52 Pro-Audio factory, watching speakers of all sorts being manufactured. Company vice president Avi El-Kiss was telling me about B-52's quality control, warranty and new manufacturing processes. Nifty. Then, on the conclusion of the tour, he showed me the digital amplifier used in the B-52 ACT-18 powered subwoofer and, finally, the finished product. Then he issued me a challenge.

"Take it out, beat it up and see if you can destroy it. "Huh?" I thought. Now that was my kind of challenge!

In reviewing products for *Mobile Beat*, writers say all kinds of things. They talk about how good the products are, go over features and applications, etc. But a personal challenge like this—well, you've got a deal.

Versatile weapons

B-52 has two new lines of powered subwoofers: the SP-18 and the ACT-18. Both utilize a brand new digital power amplifier that you can pick up with two fingers. This lightweight amplifier system acts as both the amplifier and crossover so one doesn't need any outboard circuitry to incorporate the B-52 sub into a system.

The 800/1200-watt amplifier can also be used to drive an outboard speaker such as another passive subwoofer. This pushes the amplifier from 800 watts to 1200 watts. I was able to coerce B-52 to part with both an ACT-18 wedge-shaped powered subwoofer and their ACT-18S passive wedge-shaped subwoofer.

Judging this book by its cover would be a big mistake. The spec sheet says 800 watts for a single powered sub. Combining that with lifting that lightweight amplifier, my first thought was, "This isn't going to be much. Sure, the company folks are all excited about their new product and all..." Well, the perception is deceiving.

Open fire

The challenge was to beat up the subwoofers to the point of explosion (my interpretation) so I chose the only logical path to destruction: a 300-person middle school dance-outdoors.

Hooking up these speakers could not have been easier. From the mixer one sends full-range XLR connections to the left and right input XLR connection of the subwoofer. From there several options exist. You could connect a passive subwoofer to the powered Neutrik output, which I did. In addition, there are full-range passive XLR outs or high-pass XLR outs. One could connect an amplifier to these outs or connect other powered speakers. I connected a couple of powered speakers to complete the system.

After four hours of the most current music at ear-piercing volume levels the subwoofers continued to do their duty without so much as

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a hiccup. The quantity and quality of sound from these speakers is outstanding. What's more, the amplifier is extremely efficient, so even with four powered main speakers and two subwoofers (one powered and one passive) I was still able to run the whole system on one electrical circuit without any problems.

There was absolutely no detectable hum or signal noise from the subs at all, but once the music is on, there is no doubt that B-52 knows how to produce a thumpin' subwoofer. You could definitely say B-52 dropped the bass bomb on the party.

The aftermath

With a trapezoidal shape and that lightweight amplifier built right in, these speakers are very portable. To help matters, there are wheels on the back and handles on the side and top. It was possible for one person to lift the 113-pound cabinet into a truck without too much difficulty.

Combining features, pricing, warranty and functionality, B-52's new ACT-18 subwoofers are an excellent choice. They're electrically efficient, they sound fantastic and even hundreds of thumpin' middle-schoolers' songs couldn't destroy them. In fact, kids dancing on top of the subs was an added attraction. The subs also went to several weddings, a corporate party and a high school gymnasium dance in their stay with me and they performed admirably the whole time. The combination of powered and passive subwoofers makes an excellent package for adding ample low-end to your sound. While I've tested several other powered subwoofers in the past, these were convincing enough to prompt me to ask B-52 if I could buy them. And, yes, I know where they've been! •

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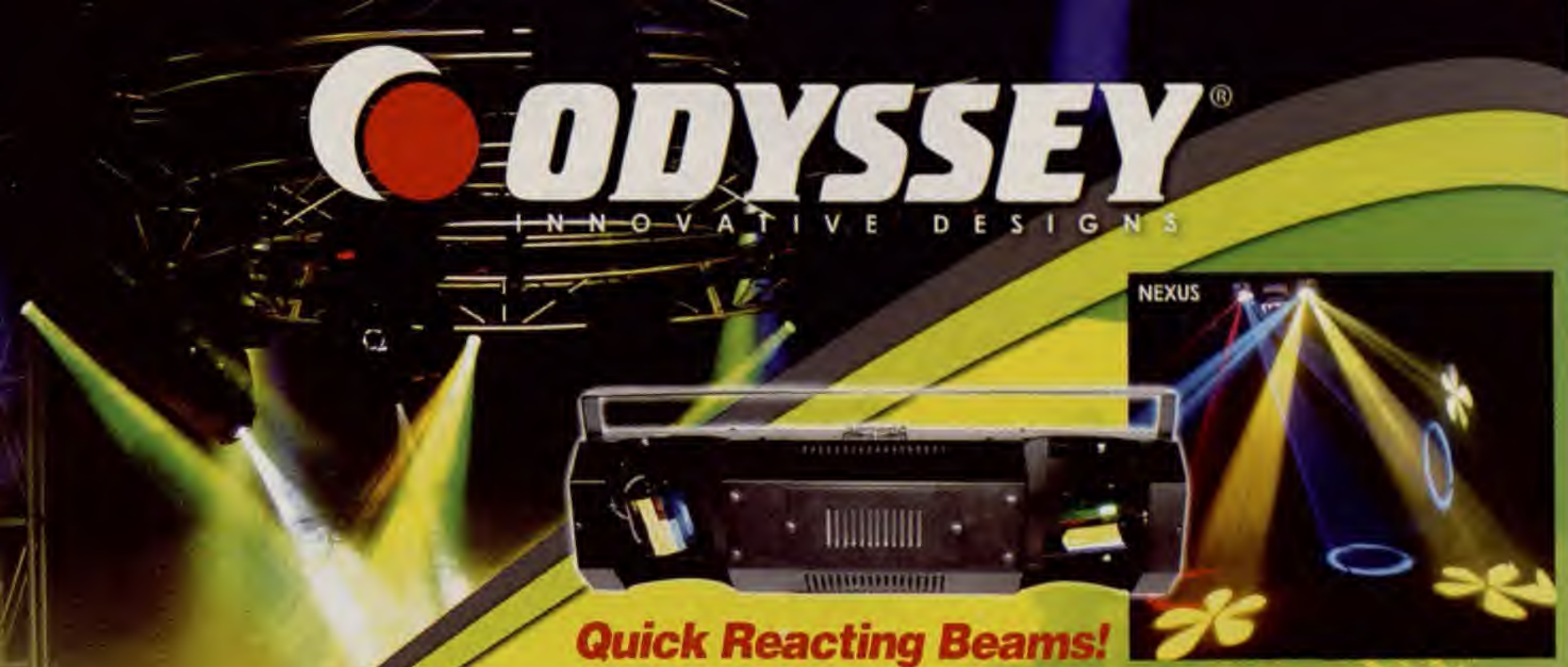

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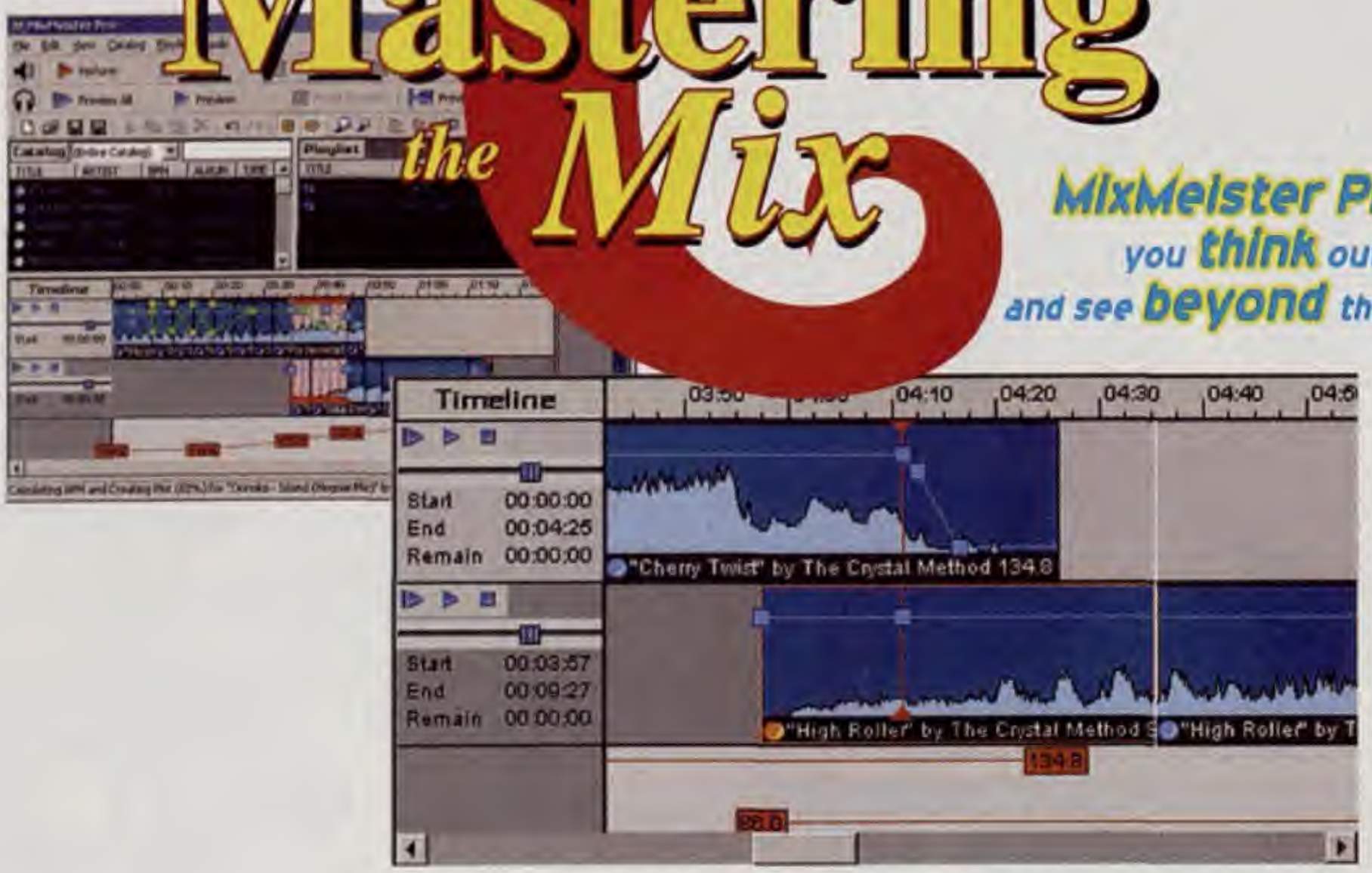
Mastering the Mix



MixMeister Pro helps you think outside the box and see beyond the next song

By Dan Walsh

The makers of MixMeister Pro set out to break the mold when they created their mixing software. While others have relied on the familiar dual turntable/CD format as they've brought together the DJ and digital worlds, the code warriors at MixMeister Technologies decided to offer an alternative interface for creating smooth, seamless mixes. What they came up with was a program that makes mixing MP3s and other compressed music files as easy as dragging, dropping and drawing some lines.

Quickly conquering the beat

Having worked with digital multitrack recording programs like ProTools and Sonar, I was immediately in familiar territory when MixMeister Pro revealed its Timeline View. Instead of only being able to look at a text-based playlist of songs and having to mentally construct your mix based on the type of song and a numerical BPM rating, this software lays out the songs in strips that resemble the tracks in a multitrack recorder. The difference is that the tracks are actually the songs from the list, with their volumes automatically normalized, their beginnings and ends overlapping, all pre-mixed and ready to go. At this point, I simply hit the "perform" button (the live "play" function, as opposed to "preview"), and listened as MixMeister Pro flawlessly segued from song to song.

MixMeister Pro works this magic by first analyzing the waveform of each song file and saving its BPM information. Loading songs is a one-time procedure. The time involved depends on computer speed and memory, so results will vary widely. On my 1.8GHz Pentium 4 machine with 512MB of RAM, it only took about 3 minutes to analyze a CD's worth of MP3s (15 tracks, averaging 4 minutes each). WMA and WAV files are also supported.

Attaining audio mastery

A little too easy? Not if you're a Mobile DJ looking for a quick way to access the power and extreme mobility of MP3 mixing. Not if you're a club DJ in search of an easy-to-get-along-with software mixing companion to add to your booth. But it doesn't end there. MixMeister Pro puts control of the mix in your hands when you're ready.

Using the tools in the Timeline View, you can adjust the overlap points and crossfades, and create beat mixes to your own taste. "Sprockets" marking transition points along each track's timeline can be moved to create various crossfades and breaks. I started by having MixMeister Pro organize the tracks in my playlist by similar BPM ("Sort All By BPM") and then triggering the "Use Beat Mixing" command. Again, at this point the program does its work quite well, creating perfectly synchronized tempo transitions from track to track. But then you can go in and adjust the BPMs to your heart's content.

MixMeister Pro lets you further customize the mix by letting you create and manipulate loop "segments" within tracks. Loops can be copied and pasted, or sections cut out easily. This editing process is "non-destructive," meaning that the edits you perform do not change the actual MP3 file that you are using. This is the state-of-the-art in multitrack recording software. Additional sound segments can also be added to the mix by using "Overlay" tracks. This is especially useful for adding drops and other short sound effects.

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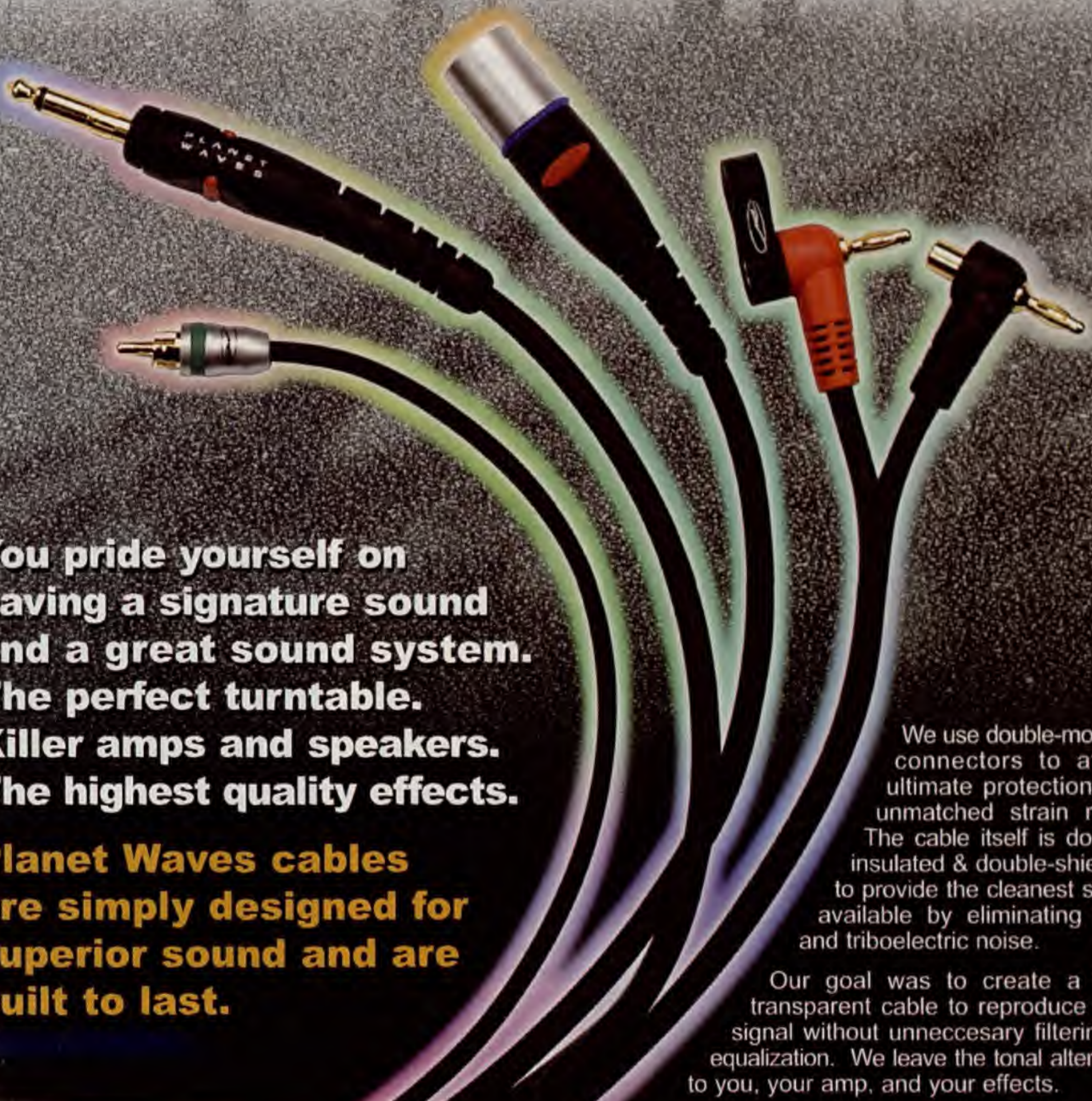

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Studio or stage

Once you have a great mix in place, you can do a number of cool things with it. First off, MixMeister Pro will save all your settings, so you can simply load up your playlist at a gig, start it, and walk away. The audience will never know about all the "work" you put into combining the tracks back home in your studio.

MixMeister Pro also provides a no-nonsense CD-burning feature that produces a CD from your playlist (as much as will fit on a disc in audio format). It lets you burn a complete, unbroken mix or you can set markers and split it into separate tracks. I tried burning a full CD-length mix and found that MixMeister Pro worked quite smoothly with my computer's CD writer.

All the features mentioned so far add up to a sleek but powerful combination of mixing tools. Here's the icing on the already tasty cake. MixMeister Pro supports third-party DirectX plug-ins. For the uninitiated, DirectX is an integrated set of Windows programming building blocks that lets software developers create all sorts of virtual audio and video devices. In this case, it means that MixMeister Pro lets you add a variety of effects modules with which to color your sound, from EQs and compressors, to filters, flangers and beyond. I had no problem accessing and using the DirectX effects I already had installed on my computer.

When you're ready to take MixMeister Pro on the road, a second audio output is all you'll need to use the program's full mix preview capability. Not only can you perform real-time crossfades, this software lets you jump to any point in the upcoming tracks to get a preview of what's coming and to try out different mix possibilities, all while the playlist is playing.

Masterpiece

I'll be blunt. I found MixMeister Pro to be the most intuitive yet, at the same time, powerful DJ mixing software package I've used to date. It provides an elegant combination of form and function without trying to fit into the traditional DJ hardware mold. While it may not have all the performance and data management features of some other DJ programs, it helped me create good-sounding mixes at all levels at which I approached the task. Whether it was hands-off, letting the software do all the work, or constructing a complex combination of tracks, overlays and effects, MixMeister Pro always worked flawlessly and always rocked the house. •

Addendum

At press time, MixMeister Technologies had just released the latest version of their software, MixMeister Pro 4. The upgrade features expanded control of DirectX plug-ins and mix editing (extra sprockets), along with additional support for beat-mixed drum loops.

MixMeister Technologies
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Minimum requirements
- Pentium II, 200MHz
- 64MB RAM
- Windows 98, ME, 2000 or XP
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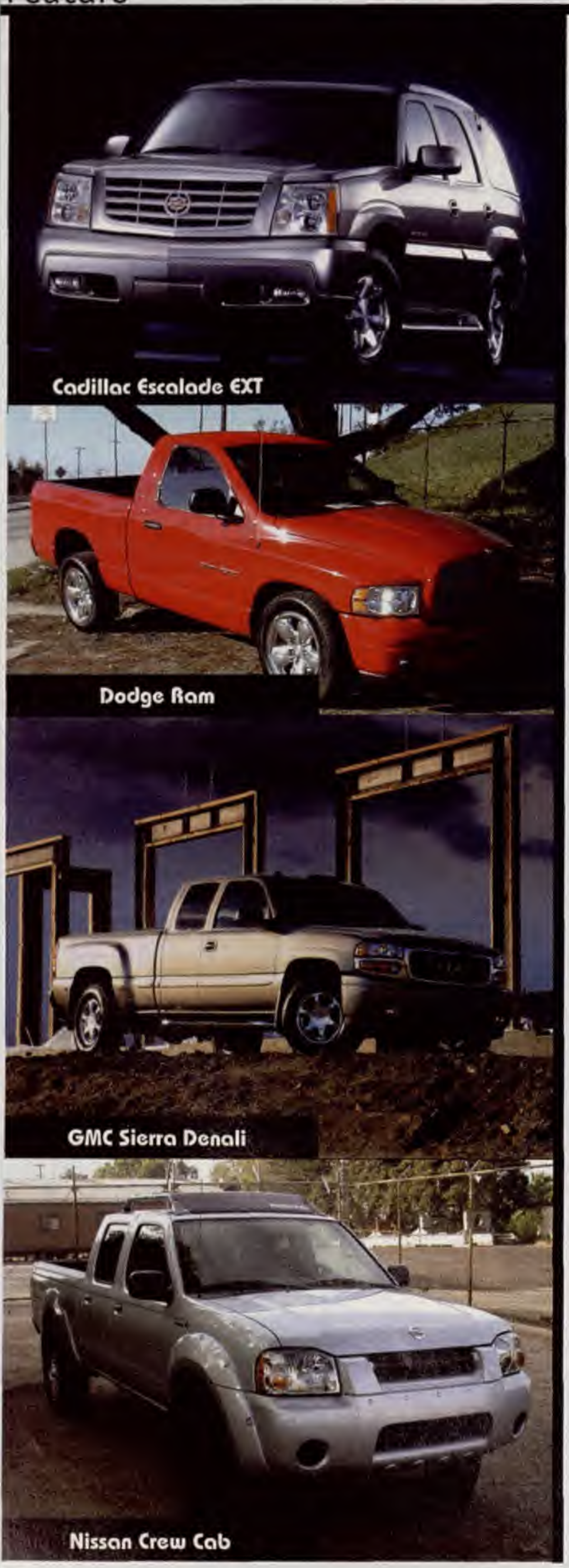
Cadillac Escalade EXT

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Maximum DJ Road Machines

By Anthony Barthel

A look at new options for mobility, as well as some ways to make your current ride more functional

Mobile Beat's annual DJ vehicle report is your source for info on Detroit's newest potential DJ gig rigs. Every year we load and unload, drive and generally abuse a variety of vehicles to see how they handle DJ gear.

This year, though, we've also added something else. To maximize your buck, we've included a few things one can do with an existing vehicle to make it more useful. To be honest, this was prompted when I contemplated buying a new truck or making the old Ford last a few more years. Considering that with a few bucks up front I could save hundreds of dollars a month in payments, insurance and registration fees, the decision was easy to make.

Overdrive overview

Surprisingly, the list of vehicles that were great last year is very similar to the vehicles that are great this year. While SUVs are more popular than ever as DJ vehicles, the trusty van is still the most practical. In most cases, SUVs load floors are high and interior materials are so fancy and expensive to replace that a scratch by an errant piece of gear can mean hundreds of dollars spent at the dealership for repairs.

The best value in DJ gig rigs is still the trusty pickup truck. For under $20,000 you can buy a fairly basic full-size pickup that will haul a substantial amount of gear. Smaller trucks are even more affordable and fuel-efficient. You can go nuts and buy a truck for over $50,000 (we'll get to that) but pickups are the Swiss army knife of DJ vehicles.

In the compact truck market the showdown is predominantly between Ford and Toyota. Between the two, they own the majority of the compact truck market. Chevrolet and GMC are in the mix with their own compact trucks, which we reviewed last year. Of course we can't forget Mazda with their B-series trucks, but those are essentially built by Ford and are identical to the Ford product with the exception of some styling and vehicle content.

Petite power

Nissan has upped the ante with their compact trucks. Taking their existing platform and restyling the surrounding sheetmetal, the 2002 Nissan pickups are very aggressive looking vehicles.

For '02 they've added a standard-bed four-door supercharged model, which we tested. In the past Nissan's Crew Cab models have had small rear seats and a short bed. With the "extended bed" model you get a useable pickup box with the same cab configuration as previous Crew Cab models.

Adding a supercharger to Nissan's 3.3-liter V6 engine gives this truck a good boost—literally. With the additional weight of the longer bed, this truck is best served with lots of power and the 210 horses hitched to this Nissan do the trick.

Out back, Nissan's formerly-puny cargo box is replaced by a 74.6" cargo box that will hold plenty of DJ gear. This is the longest cargo box of any compact pickup truck with four doors. While "compact" four-door pickups haven't been a great choice for DJs just because of the smaller cargo area, this Nissan really can haul a decent amount of gear.

Since the cab hasn't been changed (except visually) for '02, the back seat is still reserved for those who don't have legs. Nissan's advertising says four six-footers can fit into the cab, but they would have to be contortionists.

Of all the compact four-door pickups on the market the Dodge is still the example to beat. The rear passenger doors open almost 90 degrees and the rear seat cushion folds up which means the rear passenger compartment becomes a useful place for extremely valuable things like CDs or a smaller sound system console.

Ram's ready to butt heads

Up in the full-size truck department the big news is the 2002 Dodge Ram. Dodge has simplified the model offerings to essentially two configurations: a long-bed standard-cab model and a standard-bed four-door model.

Instead of the typical review vehicle with extended cabs with leather and such, it was nice to see that Dodge provided a "real" truck with a standard cab and five-speed manual transmission. But this was no stripper, mind you. It sported power seats, windows and locks; remote keyless entry; a first-rate audio system with redundant controls on the tilt steering wheel and more. This truck is equipped the way many real-world Ram 1500s will be.

One of the big surprises of this truck was the huge 20" wheels and sporty Goodyear gums on 'em. Yowza! Now we're talkin'. Combine these wheels with that "arrest-me" red paint and you have one good-lookin' truck.

Despite being a standard cab, there is a tremendous amount of room inside this vehicle for real people. The individual seats can recline comfortably and there is signifant space for stuff behind the seats. Dodge deserves an award of some sort for their center seat section. With the center section left in place, it's a relatively comfortable seat. Fold it down and there's an armrest that could become a state. Inside that arm rest you can actually put a laptop computer; there's even a power port to energize said laptop. In addition, a storage area beneath the seat adds even more practicality. Inside either cab Dodge has upgraded the interior to be more useable and comfortable. Dodge broke new ground in 1994 with the placement of their cup holders, but this cab is more a refinement of the old design than a whole new concept.

One significant change is the addition of adjustable pedals for the driver, a major safety feature that allows shorter drivers to maintain a safe distance from the steering wheel-mounted airbag. Speaking of air bags, Dodge has broken new ground with the Ram by offering side curtain air bags as an option—the first pickup to do so.

Motivating these trucks are two new engines and one carryover powerplant.

Chevrolet Avalanche

The Avalanche's versatile seatfold

Cadillac control panel

Ram interior

For the frugal, Dodge has incorporated the 3.7-liter V6 engine which first appeared in the Jeep Liberty. This 215 horsepower engine provides 35 more horsepower and about a mile per gallon better fuel efficiency than the engine it replaces.

A 4.7-liter V8 engine is next on the list, providing 235 horsepower and also achieving about a mile per gallon better fuel efficiency than the old 5.2-liter V8 it replaces.

Both engines can be mated to an optional automatic transmission featuring a dual second gear ratio that is chosen automatically based on the load situation. Towing and hauling capability of this truck are improved over its predecessor but if you want to move up to the 2500 or 3500 series in this new style, you'll have to wait until 2003.

Multifaceted Avalanche

Every once in a while someone comes out with a vehicle that makes you say, "Why didn't anyone think of that before?" Ford's Mustang in the 1960s was one of those. Chrysler's minivans in the 1980s were another. Now there's the Chevrolet Avalanche in the new millennium. What's the Avalanche, you ask? I went to Portland, Oregon to find out.

Chevrolet's new Avalanche is essentially a Chevrolet Suburban but with a unique cargo area that converts from passenger-holding plus a short pickup box to an extended-bed pickup box within a few moments. What Chevrolet has done is taken the famed Suburban and remove the top of the cargo area. Then they give you the option of utilizing the rear seats, or folding them down to maximize cargo carrying.

To thoroughly test the Avalanche, I took it, with three other DJs, to the Mobile Beat DJ Show in Las Vegas. Based on the outward appearance of the Avalanche, you would assume it's a rough-and-tumble truck. But driving along the highway, the Avalanche almost seems to glide along. The interior couldn't be more comfortable. The ergonomics are excellent and road and vehicle noise are absolutely minimum. Even with four large guys in the vehicle, everyone was comfortable.

With the rear seats up there is seating for five (or six, depending on the front seating area chosen by the buyer) plus a large cargo box out back. In this configuration the rear seats have all the room of those in a Suburban, which is sort of America's unofficial family limousine. The large rear cargo area is fully lined with scratch-resistant materials so you don't feel bad throwing tools or other paint-unfriendly items in there.

Above the bed is a three-piece tonneau cover made of aluminum and sheet-molding-compound material that makes your load secure. With the covers in place your cargo is basically invisible to prying eyes. This cargo bed cover is made of three pieces, each weighing less than 20 pounds, yet able to withstand at least 200 pounds of weight on top.

Even with the covers on and the seats up, the Avalanche can hold a remarkable amount of gear, as we proved when we purchased a crazy amount of gear at the DJ show and loaded it in with too much luggage and other junk.

In addition to the bed itself, there are two large, locking compartments on either side that can stow fairly substantial items. This would be great for cables and all the miscellaneous things we carry as DJs.

So far, we've got a huge "trunk" with a lid that can be easily removed and two large compartments. But this isn't all that's possible with this unique vehicle. Chevrolet has a device called a "midgate" that is, essentially, a folding wall between the cargo box and the rear seat. Above the midgate is the truck's rear window. Just like in an early 1970s Corvette, this window can easily be removed by one person. It stows handily in a pocket on the midgate.

The window and the midgate appear to operate independently with a panel between them, but if one removes the window and then lowers the midgate the panel folds down with the midgate. Ingenious! This results in one big, unobstructed cargo bed from the back of the front seats to the tailgate all protected by durable plastic surfaces. With the rear seats and midgate down, this means 8'1" of continuous cargo length – just like a long-bed full-size pickup. Chevrolet likes to refer to the Avalanche as the "ultimate utility vehicle." Based on the number of different configurations it offers, this isn't a far-fetched description.

Driving this full-size Chevrolet truck is like driving a Suburban. Climb into the driver's seat and there is a commanding view of the road. One has a sense of power from way up there. Chevrolet's 5.3-liter 285 horsepower V8 under the hood backs up that feeling. No, the Avalanche isn't going to be winning any street races, but it certainly doesn't feel wimpy either.

In addition to the standard 1500 series Avalanche, Chevrolet will soon offer a 2500 series model, which will incorporate a larger Vortec V8 and be capable of towing up to 12,000 pounds. Wow.

If the Avalanche just isn't luxurious enough for you, Cadillac has added its touch to the Avalanche to produce the Cadillac Escalade EXT. The tested EXT had all the positive features of the Avalanche but with a 6-liter V8 engine and all-wheel-drive. Of course it features all the luxury features you would expect in a Cadillac. If you want to make an impression and you've got $50,000 or more, the Escalade EXT is certainly a viable option.

Full four-wheel potential

The General has been playing around with four-wheel steering since the 1960s. In the days when cars were getting ever larger, GM spent a lot of time and effort figuring out ways to make these road monsters something a normal person could drive. Nothing much ever came of GM's efforts in the '60s, though.

Now, the combination of computer technology and forty years worth of engineering and design have culminated in the GMC Sierra Denali pickup. While this pickup is in the "if you have to ask, you can't afford it" class, it has some interesting features worth looking at.

It is the first pickup that sports four-wheel steering. Using a combination of electronic wizardry and mechanical tidbits, the Denali's rear wheels help handling by steering based on vehicle speed. Below 45 miles per hour, the rear wheels steer in the opposite direction of the front wheels. Above 45 miles

per hour the wheels steer in the same direction. This provides a dramatically tighter turning radius. That means you can negotiate tight parking lots and other areas where you might not want to try to maneuver a full-size, extended-cab pickup truck. Another benefit of this system is easier lane changes at speed. Overall, driving the Denali is much easier than a comparable full-size pickup.

Under the hood there is a beefy 6-liter V8 engine shifting through a four-speed automatic transmission. You can tow up to 10,000 pounds with this combination. Heck, instead of hauling all your gear to a high school for a dance, it would almost be easier to haul the school to the gear.

Another feature of the Denali is all-wheel-drive. This makes the truck useful in almost any road condition. While not intended for serious off-roading, all-wheel-drive and four-wheel-steering are a great combination when the road gets sloppy.

Chevrolet likes to refer to the Avalanche as the "ultimate utility vehicle." Based on the number of different configurations it offers, this isn't a far-fetched description.

Aftermarket Enhancements

Slide into bed

While shopping around, you might think, "Yeah, but a pickup is so difficult to load." Now there's a bit of a solution. Several companies offer a sliding pickup bed liner that helps ease loading and unloading. The device also allows easy access to gear in the bed no matter where you've put it.

We tested the Innovative Fabric Works Bedslide device in my tired old Ford F150 pickup. The Bedslide is sort of a big drawer that fits right into the back of a pickup, van or other cargo vehicle. After drilling three holes in the bed (two for pins in the front and one in the back) you simply drop in the Bedslide and you're ready to go. (In the case of my experience, professionals drilled the holes. Nothing like drilling into the fuel tank and vaporizing 45 gallons of gasoline. Yahoo. Amen.)

The Bedslide will hold up to 1,000 pounds of gear on the flat, carpeted surface. It does raise the load floor by about three inches but makes getting at those items in the back of the bed easier. The Bedslide locks in two positions; about halfway out and fully closed.

Even with a full load of stuff on it, we found the Bedslide easy to move in and out. It makes a great addition for pickups, vans or other vehicles where it might not be possible to get at gear in the back.

Crawl into a shell

OK, so they're not called camper shells any more, but "caps." After having bad experiences with several caps and broken components, I came up with a list of pointers to look for when shopping for a camper sh—I mean cap.

After going through two caps on one truck—for the same reason—the best advice is to search for quality. The primary place where caps seem to fail is in the rear window hinges. Search for quality materials in the rear window liftgate hinges: plastic and stamped inexpensive sheetmetal are not acceptable. Since DJs open the back liftgate a great deal, this is definitely one area of concern. A quality installation should also result in a completely weather-tight fit. This too is an area of obvious difference from one installer to another.

Well, there you have it—another look at the latest and greatest ways to get you and your gear to where you're going. Just as Mobile DJs continue coming up with new equipment configurations, the number of options for DJ vehicles has also become greater. It's certainly possible to build a DJ system that one could tote around in the new Mini, but some DJs still have enough fun acquiring and even building their own equipment to require a big ol' honkin' truck. Trucks are a good choice for their affordability, reliability and ease of maintenance. •

Going Mobile with Style

DJ vehicles double as equipment movers and moving billboards

In patriotic style, Rob Jackson's Noise Pollution "Transport" cruises a parade route.

Eldon "Big E" Gragert of Sound Waves Productions, Hooker, OK parks his classic conveyance on Fremont Street during Mobile Beat's 2002 Las Vegas DJ Show.

David Lee of Forsyth, IL shows off his latest Party Time DJs Jambulance at the 2002 Mobile Beat Summer DJ Show in Chicago.

Steve Statz (Travelin' Tunes, Rock Springs, WI) can pack a lot of entertainment horsepower into his custom-built rig.

Quebec's Eric Vincent rocks the North Country with the Disco Mobile 20-100.

Mike Shroyer serves the Canyon Lake, CA area with a trailerful of Good Time Entertainment.

With his Escalade and trailer, Joe Bunn (Raleigh, NC) sports the sleek, elegant look.

On a serious note, we're very glad Robb Smith of the FAME DJ School walked away from this DJ vehicle after being hit by a drunk driver on the way home from a gig. Be careful out there, Mobile DJs!

By A. Barthel, R.A. Lindquist, R. Martinez, & D.P. Walsh

Why not construct a Virtual Reality Party?

In the Bing Crosby classic, Holiday Inn, our hero decides to leave the glitzy, stressful 24/7 world of showbiz in favor of operating a showplace of his own in a converted country inn. The twist is that his venue will only be open on holidays, and the entertainment is always built around that particular special day. The idea succeeds for two reasons, first, because of the wild extremes Bing goes in order to create sets and songs that fit the theme, and, because it's a movie and things can work anyway the writers want it to.

From time to time, we have introduced you to DJs experimenting with and even exploiting the theme party idea. We even presented a whole series of articles showing how an otherwise routine event could be taken to a whole new dimension by building it around a theme.

Time has past and now your audiences want more. This is the age of new technology, so let's call it the "Virtual Reality Party." In it, you'll provide not only the music, but also a host of props and decorations to transport your audiences to a three-dimensional party world of your creation. We're talking wow power. A party atmosphere so well done that as soon as they walk in the door, the guests are totally overwhelmed with what you have done.

Props, novelties and beyond

The whole idea behind the Virtual Reality Party is that it is so inclusive and so complete that you can make it part of your marketing materials and put it on your business card. For example, let's say you live in an area where there is a particularly high interest in NASCAR. Obviously, that's a trademarked name so you can't offer a "NASCAR Party" without going through a bunch of legal hoops. So your first challenge is to come up with a name that describes the party package. Call it "Victory Lane."

Your next challenge is to collect as many interesting auto racing items as possible, and decide how you want to use them. It's very important that each time you book a Victory Lane party there is consistency from the props to the presentation.

For example, your package might include:

- Checkered flag table cloths
- Special centerpieces for all the tables (helmets, possibly)
- Rotating yellow and red beacons on top of your speakers
- DJs and assistants in driver suits
- A specially designed DJ booth incorporating tires and a hood as a front piece.
- Remote control racecars for a challenge among the participants
- Renting arcade games centered around automotive themes
- Renting slot cars for the racing theme
- Cardboard cut-out figures of popular NASCAR racers
- Monitors around the room with ongoing videos of racing events or racing movies
- Tables named after racecar drivers rather than simply numbered

The next consideration is the music, which is relatively easy. As you would for any event, you'll want to get suggestions from the client as to what they are expecting. Add to this your own special playlist of songs relating to cars and racing. A party with this particular theme would most likely require a good dose of oldies and country, but there are numerous newer pop tunes that would fit as well.

To add an interactive element to the event, you might want to incorporate trivia or a team-building exercise. (More on team-building later.) This could be a very valuable asset as you look for new ways to compete in the tight corporate market.

World of ideas

Here are some basic ideas, courtesy of Anaheim's Ray Martinez, that will get you thinking creatively. Start here and let your imagination loose!

A Hawaiian party could involve a luau setting, a pig roast, hula dancers, etc. Create a Caribbean feel with a steel drum band and everyone dressed in white, like they do on the islands. Generate a variety of Latin atmospheres by including a live Mariachi band, or salsa group.

Put your own spin on some popular themed events. Sports events call for jerseys, games, trivia, etc. Push the ever-popular sock hop over the top with a real live Elvis, live singing, old cars, a diner set-up with hamburgers, hot dogs and a milkshake machine and more. Take a country event out-of-doors by having a hoedown night, complete with hay, a campfire and scary stories.

Have a client who's having trouble booking a number of holiday events? Suggest a November date and throw a "HallowThankMas" party to cover all three major holidays. Start with costumes and Christmas tunes and proceed from there.

Birthday celebrations, especially surprise parties, provide unique opportunities for creative themes. Find out as much as possible about the guest of honor and build a theme party around their interests. Martinez has created numerous themed parties along these lines, including: an Art Show (with a simu-

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lated museum!) for an art-lover; "Puttin' on the Ritz"—a black tie, nostalgic, Academy Awards-style bash; and for another of his entertainment industry clients, an actual "Oscars" party, with the Hollywood sign, spotlights, prizes, and mini-Oscars (i.e., best story about the guest of honor = "best screen play," etc.).

Some companies have specialized in their own theme party flavor. One of these is What A Picnic of Valencia, California. An outgrowth of Mark Fortier's What A Party, it takes the typical picnic experience way beyond the "next level." Check out www.whatapicnic.net for a taste.

Marketing your creation

Themed parties are big in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah market. Kids love themed events and the list of themes can be as wide as a kid's imagination. Sports, popular music, space and fantasy provide plenty of ideas.

Popular in the corporate market today, as mentioned earlier, is *team-building*, which is used by large companies to engender a feeling of team spirit among their employees, er, team members.

Many of the party games we use in other events serve well as team-building exercises, like the ones you can pick up at the Mobile Beat DJ Shows. A good theme to use here would be a virtual television game show. Donning the personality of a TV game show host (how many times have brides asked us not to be TV game show hosts?) you could stage various competitive scenarios. It's not difficult to adapt versions of TV's The Weakest Link, Who Wants To Be a Millionaire or Family Feud into Mobile DJ-friendly games. Put up a few PAR cans, spin some tunes from your TeeVee Tunes discs and work some bonding magic. Creative Imagineering's Game Show Mania and other systems can really bring these experiences to life.

If you don't want to purchase a lot of items for your theme parties, you can rent and/or find local companies to partner with. In the Victory Lane example, you could find local companies or clubs that specialize in remote controlled or slot racecars.

Regardless of the event, if you offer a Virtual Reality Party that relates to a prospective client's interest, that may well be what gets you the job. Today's DJ clients are looking for more than just music and an MC. They want an experience that their guests will not long forget. With a little creativity, you can give them that and more. The key is, it's got to have wow power! •

We are always interested in knowing what exciting performance and marketing ideas you are pursuing. If you'd like to share your own experience, drop us a line or e-mail the editor at dwalsh@mobilebeat.com.

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Refreshing Holiday Dance Ideas

By Mike Ficher

Deck the floor with plenty of twisters
Fa la la la la, la la la la
'Tis the season to be boppin'
Fa la la la la, la la la la
Don we now our 50's apparel
Fa la la, la la la, la la la,
Stroll to the oldies fad dance carol
Fa la la la la, la la la la

OK, "Weird" Al Yankovic has no worries about competition in the satirical lyric department. But, the idea of wrapping your holiday party around an expanded theme might be a novel twist in this challenging year of business.

Plus, with no current dance phenomenon commanding the main screen on the pop culture radar (remember country in the mid-'90s, swing in the late '90s and salsa most recently), the energy, excitement and creativity of the '50s and '60s fad dances could be a wonderful gift to your clients this holiday season.

Rockin' around the Christmas tree

Many companies that parlayed the high tech investment bubble of the mid and late 1990s into extravagant and excessive holiday blowouts scaled back company celebrations significantly the last two years. And the near future portends more of this austere approach to holiday spending.

In developing promotional material for the holidays or discussing ideas with booked and potential clients, injecting the thought of a dance, music or event theme could create the impression that the host is getting more ornaments for their seasonal entertainment investment. And, the '50s might just be the ticket.

While Christmas songs offer wonderful dinner music material, with few exceptions, most are not suitable for dance playlists. So, after you've embraced a fitting selection of traditional holiday tunes during the meal and/or cocktail hour, the dance floor is open game.

Perhaps a set featuring a Stroll line to encourage camaraderie or showmanship? Maybe you could choreograph the holiday hand jive? Or, perhaps, conduct a twist contest—with the audience judging, of course—to give away prizes?

Twist and shout

One of the benefits of the '50s theme is the teeming sleigh of material to draw upon. Hot cars, simple yet distinctive attire, motion picture icons, teen idols, classic American food (hamburgers, hot dogs, sundaes), memorable and time-tested music, colorful décor and, of course, fun and energetic dances offer the potential to coordinate all aspects of an event around a single thread.

While your playlist does not need to stay within the confines of the '50s for the majority of the evening (a few sets may be satisfactory), pieces built around a dance gimmick, such as the freeze, balloon, snowball or broom dance (see sidebar) or specific fad dances such as the Hand Jive, Stroll, or Twist might stimulate participation, reinforce the theme and allow you to easily interact with the guests.

With some imagination and the plentiful material from the '50s you can develop your own unique show ideas or modules. And with so many popular fad dances to select, so many readily available cultural standards to leverage, so many family-friendly trends to tap, the '50s can partner exceptionally well with a holiday theme to present an unforgettable gift to your clients in the coming seasons. •

The '50s can partner exceptionally well with a holiday theme to present an unforgettable gift to your clients.

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Cool Gimmicks

In addition to the fad dances, gimmick dances were a popular feature at sock hops. Employ these as show material or develop a creative variation on these popular activities.

FREEZE DANCE
Couples dance to an up-tempo tune and attempt to "freeze" when the music unexpectedly stops. If either member of a couple moves after the music stops, they are asked to leave the floor. Music resumes then stop—remove couples—start pattern until one couple remains. The final duo receives a prize.

BALLOON DANCE
A balloon is placed between two dancers who do not otherwise make contact. Couples must move energetically to the music yet keep the balloon afloat. If the balloon touches the ground or escapes their grasp, they are asked to leave the floor. The final duo receives a prize.

BROOM DANCE
Although the possibility of cheap labor for a clean floor might appear to be the concept, the broom is actually used to eliminate dancers from the floor. A couple dances with the broom for a few seconds, then upon the call of an emcee, passes the broom to another couple. If a couple has the broom when the music stops, they are asked to leave the floor. Music resumes then stop—remove couples—start pattern until one couple remains. The final duo receives a prize.

For especially large groups, more than one broom might be appropriate. And more than one winner might be fitting, too.

SNOWBALL DANCE
One couple occupies the dance floor at the start of a song. Every 10 or 15 seconds, all dancers leave the floor and invite another dancer to be their partner. The pattern continues until—hopefully—all guests are on the dance floor. Then, after the song is over, follow with the best dance song available to maximize the opportunity to retain the floor.

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Building the Case for Service Focused Marketing

How are most Mobile DJs currently marketing themselves in the wedding arena?

The best representative example I could find was a small company in San Dimas, California, started by Theodore Preston in the early '90s. Theodore, and his good friend, Bill, had been in a band together when they were in high school. After high school ended, they decided to use some of the equipment to start up their own Mobile DJ service.

After breaking into some of the local school dances and doing some birthday parties, they set their sights on the lucrative wedding market. After carefully examining how all the DJs in their area were selling to wedding clients in wedding magazines, wedding shows and the yellow pages, they quickly developed their own marketing materials, including business cards, brochures and flyers. Their ads highlighted their vast music libraries, professional equipment, killer light shows and proudly declared that they created "Bitchin' Parties Dude!" Perhaps you've heard of them...

The truth can be painful

Obviously I made up this company, but the point of the story is completely valid. How did "Bill & Ted" create their wedding marketing campaign? The same way most of us have done it. They used the same methods most Mobile DJs have used to develop their marketing approaches and the same methods Mobile DJs have used for setting their prices. They looked at the other DJs in their market and then set out to copy or improve on what they saw.

But what if Mobile DJs are copying methods used by other DJs that are faulty or ineffective? Then they will just be creating similar or better versions of the same faulty or ineffective marketing methods.

I tried the Bill & Ted's approach with my marketing and my pricing, and within the first 6 months of starting my business, I wound up homeless with my wife and two boys for six months. Shortly after that jarring experience I sought out Mark Ferrell and started applying basic business principles for valuing my services and charging a fee that would enable me to make an honest living as a Mobile DJ.

Then I set out to learn all I could about the basic principles for doing effective marketing. After spending years researching this area, trying out new ideas and studying many books on the subject, I have uncovered what I believe are the "6 Pillars of Wedding Marketing" that relate specifically to attracting wedding clients and positioning your services.

Wedding Marketing should always be...

- >1 Service Focused
- >2 High Quality
- >3 Simple
- >4 Personal
- >5 Emotional
- >6 Targeted

Before we begin to examine the first Pillar, I want to build the case for its necessity. I believe the first Pillar is the most overlooked and misunderstood principle and method for wedding marketing in our industry. Take a look at this quote...

"The person who delivers what the customer wants and meets the customer's needs, will always make lots of money."

The keys words to focus on in this quote are the words "wants" and "needs." So, let's examine what our wedding clients' wants and needs really are.

What do our wedding clients want?

They want a wedding reception that is...fun, interactive, entertaining, energetic, lively, exciting, unforgettable, unique, memorable, meaningful, personal, intimate, romantic, emotional, sentimental, stress-free, care-free, well-organized, relaxed, comfortable, smooth-flowing, elegant, classy, formal and traditional.

You may find yourself asking how I was able to come up with all these descriptive words. It's simple really, I just asked my clients. I've been asking them for years to describe how they are picturing their reception in just three words and the previous list is a compilation of their answers added up over the years.

But, did you notice that none of the answers included a Denon dual CD player? I'm certainly glad I have one and I firmly believe in using the best tools, but my Denon dual CD player is not the focus of my marketing campaign.

So, now that we have a clear picture of what our wedding clients want, let's take a look at what they need to make their wants into realities.

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Someone who can deliver the kind of reception they want.
Today's wedding clients want their reception to be unique and personalized. They would prefer to develop a custom-crafted reception than be stuck with a "McWeddings" style of service.

Ideas and advice for their planning process.
Most wedding clients have very little experience in planning a wedding, especially from an entertainment perspective. Most Mobile DJs have performed at hundreds of receptions and are, thereby, more than qualified to offer much needed advice and creative ideas.

A team player who is comfortable being the captain.
It's becoming more common for someone to take the lead at wedding receptions to ensure a party that flows well. The person with the most entertainment experience is the most logical choice to fulfill this role.

A confident and eloquent spokesperson.
Being a Master of Ceremonies implies coordination and announcements. But the person on the microphone at a wedding reception is really the bride and groom's spokesperson. Everything that person says and how it is said makes an impression on the guests about the bride and groom.

A person who has the unique skills to make the party happen.
We all know from experience that our skills and talents are extremely rare and hard to come by. Anyone can play a CD, but knowing just which song to play at just the right moment is a talent and a skill that is hard to come by.

A reliable business person with the right attitude.
Basic business ethics show us that reliability, honesty and integrity are the foundations for a long-lasting, successful business. The right customer service attitude can be a major asset in this industry especially.

Great-sounding music from professional equipment.
This should be a no-brainer, but some DJs still don't recognize the value of professional gear and a quality music library.

Peace of mind!
This is probably the most important need our wedding clients have. They want their wedding reception to be fun and they don't want to worry about how that's going to happen. They want someone they can trust to deliver everything that has been promised, without the fear of being embarrassed in the process.

Now that we can clearly see what wedding clients want and need, are these things services or products? They are clearly services!

Our client's wants & needs = our services
Therefore, wedding marketing should always be service-focused. In the next issue we will begin to examine the six keys for creating a service-focused marketing approach. Keep coming back...

Peter Merry is the 2002 President of the SoCal Chapter of the ADJA and he is also a marketing consultant at www.DiscJockeyAmerica.com. For more information, go to www.PeterMerry.com.

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HOT, HOT, HOT!

Mobile Beat Summer DJ Show sets the Windy City on fire once again

The air conditioning plant in Chicago's Radisson Hotel O'Hare was working overtime during the last week of June 2002, due to two factors. The first was the sweltering Midwest heatwave going on outside. The second much more invigorating factor was the excitement level of the Mobile Beat Summer DJ Show and Conference that was heating up inside.

With DJs ready to learn and load up their vehicles with new gear, and show speakers and exhibitors eager to help them, Mobile Beat's encore appearance in Chicago (June 25-27, 2002) really had the joint a-jumpin'.

The Allstars had the crowd bubbling with excitement

Serious fun

Always the place for DJs to enjoy partying, rather than work at creating the party, the show overflowed with festive possibilities. Monday night's pre-show welcome bash, hosted by Promo Only and Pioneer, pumped up Maxie's, the hotel's in-house club, with a maximum display of cutting edge audio and video technology. The hotel's ballroom was the scene of an entertaining yet still educational DJ Allstars event on the first night of the show. This program has become a favorite for many DJs who want to kick back and have fun with their peers, while still absorbing game ideas and icebreakers that they can take home and use.

The gear seekers filling the exhibit hall came ready to buy

American Audio's DJ Skilz in motion on his new signature CD player

The King (George Mize, Mize's Karaoke & DJ Serv., Peru, IN) and his doc (Russ Harris, Show On The Road, Naperville, IL)—chillin' before or after the big show?

Allstar MC Ken Cosco gets the crowd fired up

Wednesday evening saw Sound Choice, VocoPro and Singer Magazine sponsoring a karaoke contest for DJs and KJs who like to sing (there are a lot of you out there!).

Thousands of dollars worth of DJ gear and other goodies were given away at these events, as well as in the exhibit hall throughout the show. Music Industry Workshop awarded two $700 training packages, while various manufacturers supplied mixers, CD players, props, CDs, and other DJ stuff during major giveaways at the Guitar Center and Pioneer booths. The festivities culminated with a Pioneer DJ set-up going to longtime show supporter, John Ferry, of Happy Daze DJ Service, Lockport, Illinois.

As regular Mobile Beat show attendees have come to expect, the quality and variety of exhibitors provided ample opportunities to check out hot new products, talk one-on-one with specialists from major manufacturers, and find special show discounts.

Seminars

A Las Vegas show favorite, Peter Merry opened the seminars with an in-depth look at where the Mobile DJ industry has been and where it's headed, as well as how the industry can continue to build its reputation as a true profession. Later, he covered *wedding marketing essentials* for another audience hungry for fresh ways to approach this bread & butter area.

DJs with questions about technology, from basic audio electronics to the complexities of DMX lighting, got answers they could use from DJ Dr. Drax during two info-packed sessions. The former aerospace engineer debunked tech myths and pro-

Mobile Beat show veteran John Ferry (Happy Daze DJs, Lockport, IL) won a Pioneer performance system

"Hmm...imagine the damage I could do with these!"

It is my pleasure...

...to say that the Chicago Mobile Beat Show was a great event. I am so glad to see that the industry really cares about the people and the people care about the industry. Looking forward to the next show! I've been DJing for 11+ years now and I learned a lot of new information that I could not have found anywhere else. I also made new friends in the industry that I can rely on. —Drew Walker, The Solid Rock Sound Machine, Topeka, Kansas

DJ Hot Toddy spins the latest Pioneer technology at Maxie's

DJ ladies be jammin'

Info-hungry DJs were fully satisfied at the seminars

vided the hard facts every DJ needs to get everything set up correctly.

Ryan Burger of ProDJ.Com, drawing upon his years of experience building the Web presence of the DJs nationwide, expanded upon his recent article in Mobile Beat on leveraging your site to gain maximum marketing impact.

How a company's position in the marketplace affects the owner's reputation, and how that, in turn, affects hiring and business growth were the subjects of a seminar by Matt Martindale. Multi system owners and single-ops alike came away with a lot of food for thought.

Breakthrough Marketing's Tom Quiner, along with moderator Larry Rodkin (Lawrence of Florida), shared numerous ways to get the most out of a marketing budget. Not just a dry presentation of facts, these presenters had the audience laughing while learning how to best utilize everything from brochures to bridal shows.

Self-awareness was the essence of Todd Powers' program on DJ egos. Taking an intriguing point of view, he showed how DJs could build on their own special personality qualities and win over their audiences.

Another unique perspective, this time on mixing and music, came from DJ, electronic musician, and music professor Don Malone. He left the attendees with a better grasp of the musical tools and tricks available to Mobile DJs for bringing the excitement of club-style mixing to just about any event.

Ken Cosco piled on ideas for increasing profits with add-ons and up-sells. Designing themed events, adding inflatables, dancers, video, casinos—you name it, he covered it.

The Love Shack Singers: "Everybody's groovin' it!"

Lucky winners found that not everything had a price tag!

Welcome to the wonderful video world of Promo Only

Shelly Ann (DNA Ent., Norwalk, OH) got the singalong party going at Shoeless Joe's

DJ Dr. Drax fields a tech question

DJs looking to take their businesses to a higher level of efficiency learned management secrets from Howard Wallach. He revealed ways to improve organization in the office as well as at each event.

Along with the primary seminar program, a number of other learning and networking opportunities were available at this year's summer show. Creative performance was the focus at American Audio's session on digital scratching and adding effects to the mix. Pioneer presented a digital hardware clinic to help DJs get up to speed on the latest developments in performance technology. And for those thinking about adding video to their bag of tricks, Promo Only covered the VJ essentials.

Attendees eager to talk seriously about the direction of the industry, music and society, as well as the direction of their lives as DJs, gathered at a discussion ("Still Standing for Something") led by Drax, and also at the CrossMix prayer breakfast.

Carrying the torch

Ranging from the stimulating to the sublime, the Mobile Beat 2002 Chicago Summer Show had something to offer every style of DJ, at every level, from novice to expert. If you missed it this time around, be sure to catch the next national DJ gathering at the Tropicana Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, February 18-20, 2003. And don't forget the next stop for the Summer Show (June 30, July 1&2 2003): Orlando, Florida, the land of sun and fun!

For info on upcoming events, turn to page 82 of this issue or find it on the Web at www.mobilebeat.com.

American Disc Jockey Awards

MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT AT MOBILE BEAT CHICAGO:
American Disc Jockey Awards Show Returns to Vegas in 2003

The American Disc Jockey Awards Show will return to Las Vegas after a three-year hiatus, in conjunction with the Mobile Beat DJ Show and Conference. Awards Show Producer Ken Knotts made the announcement to a packed room before the opening seminar of Mobile Beat's Summer Show. The Awards Show will be staged in the Tropicana Hotel Ballroom on the evening of February 17, 2003—the night before Mobile Beat's Winter Conference begins.

The Academy of Professional Disc Jockey Arts and Sciences will honor the nation's top DJs for their outstanding work in a variety of categories, including "Best Technical DJ," "Best Country DJ," "Best Club DJ," "Best Karaoke Host" and several more "special awards." A highlight of the show will be the cutting edge entertainment provided by the industry's leading DJs during the "Entertainer of the Year" competition. The contestants must teach an original dance, play a new game or do a DJ related skit.

$5,000 Cash Prize!

A new attraction of the Awards Show will be the addition of a $5,000 cash prize going to the winner of the Entertainer of the Year competition. The competitors must perform their acts within 5-7 minutes. They may use props and have up to 3 "assistants" onstage. Everyone in attendance is given a ballot upon entrance to the ballroom and the entire audience votes for the winner.

More Awards Show information and contest details will appear in upcoming issues of Mobile Beat and on the Awards Show website, www.americandjawards.com.

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Mobile Beat
DJ ALLSTARS

All Fired Up: DJs Make the Show Shine

Emerson Holliday of the Party Company, in Racine, WI, is still a vinyl junkie, but after seeing some of the new digital turntables he said, "I have to look into going to CD." Emerson was impressed with how far many CD players have come in emulating the abilities of vinyl while adding additional features and reliability.

Paul Karsten and Lisa Blythe make up two thirds of Odyssey Entertainment (Waukesha, WI). The company specializes in very detail-oriented services and they spoke highly of many of the seminars and information at the show. Paul indicated that much of the information imparted in the seminars (especially during Peter Merry's and Matt Martindale's sessions) would definitely help him run the business better. Both Paul and Lisa indicated that meeting other professionals from around the country was beneficial, as they were able to share ideas with peers from companies that aren't direct competitors.

Coming in all the way from Anchorage, AK, Danny Von Weller (A.I.R.R.E.S.) was primarily interested in the tradeshow floor. "In Alaska, I get the cold shoulder from the retailers," he said. He was happy to be able to get advice, information and tips directly from the manufacturers. Here, he got to play with all the toys without a salesman snowing him into something he doesn't want.

For a variety of reasons, Karen Habel and Neil Howard (Neil Howard DJ Service, Harrisburg, PA) have never made it to a Mobile Beat Show in Las Vegas, but coming to Chicago gave them plenty of opportunities to learn. Their show is particularly interactive in an >>

area where conservative DJs flourish, so the DJ Allstars Show was a big attraction for them. They are hoping that next year the stars will come together just right so they can also make it to Vegas.

James Moore, his son, and another member of Fun Lovin' Entertainment in Buffalo, NY had a long list of things they wanted to see at the show. James and his team looked to network with professionals, in order to share ideas, information and inspiration. From the seminars he was hoping to get marketing ideas, contractual information and other great money-making tips. Obviously he's learned from experience: this is James' fifth Mobile Beat conference.

People come to Mobile Beat DJ Shows for all sorts of reasons—learning new ideas, networking, great gear buys, etc. Valerie Ruste and Steve Hicks from Music Express in Brookings, SD were here for all the typical reasons, but when pressed as to what pushed them over the edge into making the decision to come, the answer was unanimous: "We're here to ride the roller coasters!" What? Yes, their goal was to go to Six Flags during their stay and also head up to Sandusky, Ohio for a good time at Cedar Point. mixing pleasure with business. We didn't ask if they'd be putting their roller coaster rides on the corporate card. •

Casino DJ Rolls with the Changes

By David Kreiner

With a lot of experience and a little luck, DJ Frankie V. has scaled the heights of Nevada club success

DJ Frankie V. started his career in 1984 as the full time DJ and entertainment coordinator for the now defunct After Dark nightclub in South Lake Tahoe. The music format was a Top 40 club mix and he was responsible for the promotions, lighting, and sound. During his successful three-year run with the club it was the most popular nightspot in the Reno-Tahoe area.

In 1987, Frankie was offered a better position at a new Lake Tahoe club called Lily's, in the then High Sierra Casino, which is now the Horizon Casino. At Lily's he had the same responsibilities as he had previously but he also learned to deal with live music. The nightclub showcased the hottest dance bands on the West Coast. Two years into his stay at Lily's, he was promoted to assistant manager. While Frankie was there, Lily's took over as the most successful nightclub in the Reno-Tahoe area. Unfortunately, when the Horizon Casino was sold, the new owners didn't want a nightclub business on their property, so Lily's was closed in 1990.

Lighting up the hottest club

Luckily though, Caesars Tahoe Hotel Casino, just across the street, caught wind of the closing and opened up a club called Nero's 2000. Amazingly, Caesars offered jobs to the entire Lily's staff. Frankie was hired as the head DJ in 1990. The Top 40 club mix format again reigned supreme, catering to the tourist crowds. And again he dealt with live music, lighting, sound, and nightly promotions.

Frankie took a brief sabbatical from Nero's 2000, spending six months in Las Vegas. While there, he spun at the now defunct Palladium Nightclub. He also helped build the outside showroom at the Lady Luck Casino and worked as a backstage tech for the "Luck Is A Lady" show.

Back to Lake Tahoe by popular demand, he has continued his term at Nero's 2000 to this day. The nightspot's name was changed to Club Nero after the year 2000 passed. After 12 years, not only is it the most successful nightclub business in Reno-Tahoe history, it is now one of the most popular clubs on the West Coast!

Throughout his career, DJ Frankie V. has always stayed on top of new trends in music, promotions, audio, video, and lighting. He had a house music mix show for six months on 102.9 KNVQ ("Q102") in the Lake Tahoe-Carson City area. He can currently be heard on 97.3 KWNZ on Tuesdays from 12 to 1 PM doing a hip-hop mix, plus a house mix that same night. He's been a guest DJ at the hottest nightclubs in Reno, Sacramento, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Florida.

Here's what this busy DJ had to say about programming, promotions and playing the club game to win...

***Mobile Beat**: What music trends do you see happening right now?*

DJ Frankie V.: That's a tough question. Hip-hop is still king, but high-beat dance music and house is really strong during late-night sets. Hip-hop is really strong with the male segment and the high-beat dance music appeals to both segments. Cleaner R&B stuff is really big with the females in the audience. They seem to like the singing in R&B songs.

***MB**: Is it hard to program a club that is made up of mostly tourists or out-of-towners?*

Frankie: Actually it is easier. People respond to what they hear on the radio and what they are familiar with. Since radio is the same in San Francisco, Chicago and Houston, it is just how you put your sets together. I try to hit on every style of music during the night. Most of the crowd, around 70%, is 21- to 28-year-olds who want to hear the newest of the new. The rest of the crowd wants more recurrent hits. I don't do too many classics like "Mony Mony" or "Brown-Eyed Girl," etc., every night, but I will play some of those as requests early in the evening. We tend to stay with newer hit music.

***MB**: What type of gear do you use?*

Frankie: Only the best! Having a casino as the owner makes for good budgets and purchasing is a lot easier. I don't think I'd get half of this stuff with a private club owner! We have two Technics

1200s [turntables], a Denon DN2600 CD player, a Pioneer DJM-600 mixer, six Crest 7000 amps, mostly Meyer Sound speakers (8 x 18", 8 x 15" and 8 other UPA boxes), and four JBL towers.

***MB**: What about special effects, lighting, sound and video?*
Frankie: We have three 8' x 6' big screens with Sony projectors and six 27" monitors throughout the room. Standard VHS and DVD players are used sometimes but I like to use a live camera pointed at the dance floor. For lights we have 12 Technobeams [High End Lighting], 32 par 64's, one UFO-style, 16 Martin Robocolors, 32 Dataflash strobes [High End Lighting], and a 3-milliwatt, $40,000 laser with bounce mirrors throughout the room.

***MB**: What is your most successful promotion?*
Frankie: It is our "$2 U Call It Mondays." All cocktails are $2 and there's a $5 cover. This is an ongoing event. Since Heavenly Ski Resort is in our backyard, we do this every Monday, all year long. We've had over 1700 through the door on this big night!

***MB**: How do you decide on what promotions are run?*
Frankie: I get together with the club manager and we brainstorm different ideas. We do different ones during ski season, and then different ones during the summer. Our summers are busier than during ski season, which is unusual as there are 10 ski resorts in a one-hour radius. We then hand them to Paul Reder our VP of entertainment operations for final approval.

***MB**: Are you part of management?*
Frankie: Yes, I am contracted, but have management and supervisory duties.

***MB**: What is it like working for a large corporate casino?*
Frankie: It's usually pretty smooth. We only have to answer to the vice president of entertainment. Since I've been there 12 years, we have a proven track record and they trust us to get the job done. I guess it would be harder if we were just starting out.

Knowing the rules of the game
Frankie's ideas on DJing are basic but strong. "I've been successful in this business," he says, "because I learned every aspect of the nightclub business and didn't burn any bridges. The one thing I say to new DJs is after you learn to mix, program, and talk on a mic, learn everything about lighting and sound and management! The more you know, the more valuable you are to your business and the more money you can command! If you want to stay in this business and be a well-respected DJ and make good money, then expand your DJ and nightclub knowledge and have a feel for all aspects of the club business." •

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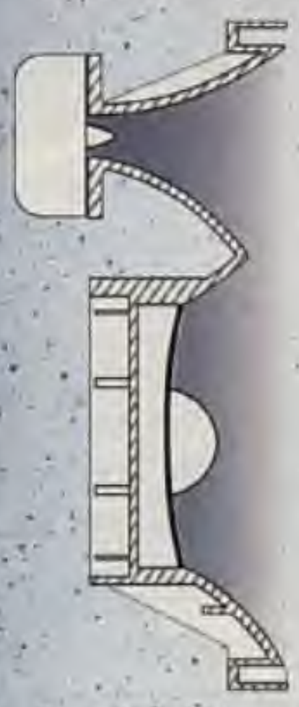

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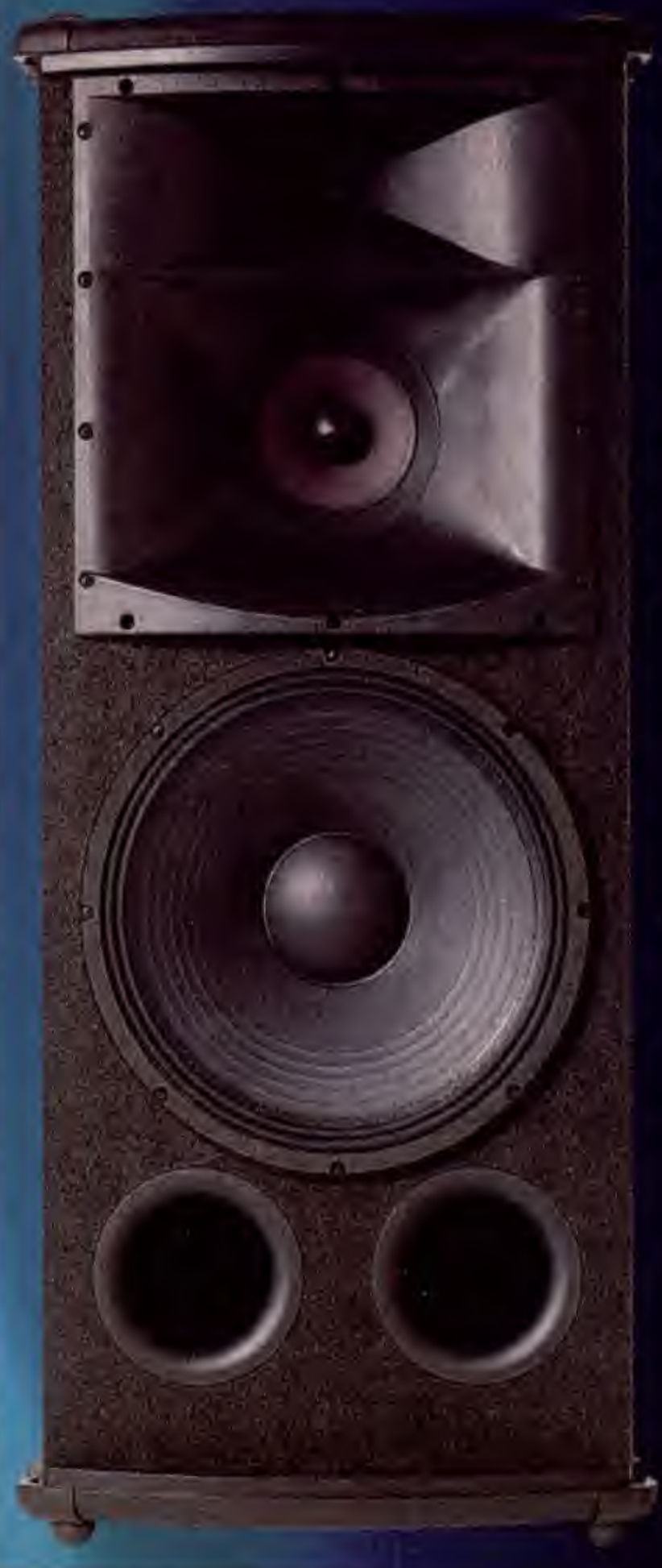

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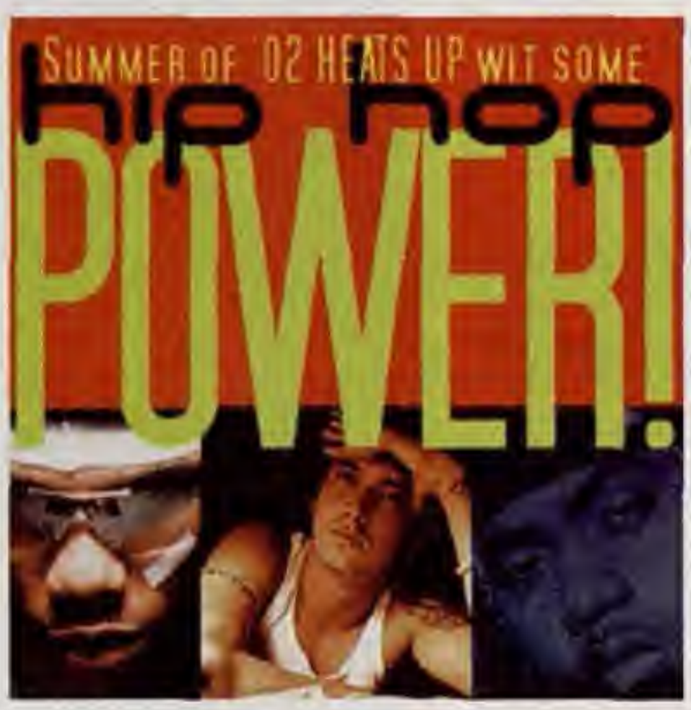
By David Kreiner

Pushing the Music into Fall

As summer fades into memory, club and radio hits are still getting heavy promotion from the record companies, while early fourth quarter releases for the busy Christmas season are starting to get a major push. The following remixes will keep your summer party attitude going well into the twilight of autumn.

Getting things started on the hip-hop/R&B tip is **FUNKY-MIX 60**. From Nelly's latest, Nellyville, comes the huge summer smash, "Hot in Herre," at 106 BPM. A killer 32-beat drum intro gets this kickin' remix started. This is one of the best remixes of this song that I've heard and definitely the best remix on this set! Next up is "Awnaw" from Nappy Roots, at 80 BPM. This Dirty South sing-along hit is getting big radio play. DJ Quick and Rakim have crafted a hypnotic track based on "Addictive" by Truth Hurts (100 BPM). Slick beats keep this radio hit moving nicely. DJ 2nd Nature provides a clean, stripped down remix of "One Mic" by Nas at 92 BPM.

What can you say about the biggest out of the box hit of the summer? Mark Roberts does a clean reworking of Eminem's "Without Me" (112 BPM). This remix supplies much-needed intro, middle and outro beats to pump up this huge smash! This remix should be a mandatory part of your CD collection. "I'm Gonna Be Alright" by Jennifer Lopez, featuring Nas (94 BPM) uses the hook from Club Nouveau's "Why You Treat Me So Bad" as the basis of this great song. DJ 2nd Nature's scratching adds a nice touch to this ultra clean remix. The lead single from Big Tymers Hood Rich CD, "Still Fly" (89 BPM) gets a clean remix from Dave Jackson. Closing out the set is the very naughty "My Neck, My Back (Lick It)" from Khia, featuring DSD, at 102 BPM. This remix has a very edgy alternative rock/hip-hop blend that is smokin'!



It's been over six months, but finally we've gotten another Culture Shock release, **CULTURE SHOCK 8**. This is the only series focusing on alternative/modern rock songs, adding extended intros and danceable beats.

First off is "Friends & Family" from Trik Turner (91 BPM), with a very basic remix treatment. "Youth Of The Nation" from P.O.D. (96 BPM) is given a slick 32-beat intro that will make this big radio hit easier to program. One of the biggest bands in the modern rock genre is Southern California's Linkin Park, and their hit "In The End" is the standout remix on this set (106 BPM). This is a much-needed extended version of this huge song. "19-2000" from Gorillaz (102 BPM), is a rock crossover radio hit that gets a real clean remix that features hip-hop beats. At 115 BPM, "Hella Good" from No Doubt is next with a very strong drum and synth bass intro that will get your crowd going in a big way. I predict that this version will still be strong for New Year's Eve parties! This is one of the best remixes I've heard of this song.

Featured in recent Mitsubishi car commercials, "Days Go By," by Dirty Vegas, at a Euro/house-ish 127 BPM, is a little bit of a departure for a rock service, but this remix still has a very edgy alternative sound. Another cut with a Euro/house feel is "Where's Your Head At?" by Basement Jaxx, at 128 BPM. This remix has a very heavy techno dance vibe but still fits the alternative mode of this set. "Hey Baby" from No Doubt gets a major overhaul at a sweaty 130 BPM. It's a full reproduction, straight from the a cappella. Very cool mix for late night sets. Closing out the set is a very usable modern rock megamix that features many of 2001's big alternative rock hits in a non-stop mix. (See sidebar for listings). This mix is quite long and will work well with male audiences and at middle and high school events.

The latest from **HOT TRACKS** is issue **21.4**. Getting things started is Anastacia with "One Day In Your Life, Part 1" at 119 BPM. It starts with a very heavy rock guitar and drum intro and is usable for early sets. At 130 BPM, "One Day In Your Life, Part 2" is more accessible, with strong techno drums and synth bass pushing the mix. Britney Spear's latest release, "Overprotected" is here, at a slow 96 BPM. This song is good for early sets only and is getting no airplay. No Doubt's "Hella Good" (115 BPM) is done well with a very clean intro and overall construction. A very usable remix of this big radio hit. Jade Anderson's "Sugarhigh" is a great late night pumper at 127 BPM. Clean girly vocals and heavy drum and synth bass push the mix. Another late night thumper is Jennifer Lopez with "Walking On Sunshine" at 133 steamy beats-per-minute. Not much airplay on this one, but it's a good club remix. Closing out the set is another techno dance remix, "Who Do You Love Now?" from Riva, featuring Danni Minogue on vocals. At a blazing 135 BPM, it really kicks for very late night sets.

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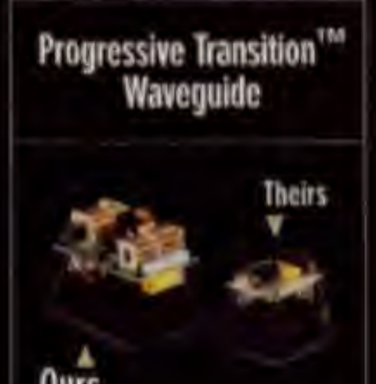

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CULTURE SHOCK 8

Friends & Family	TRIK TURNER	91
Youth Of The Nation	P.O.D.	96
In The End	LINKIN PARK	106
19-2000	GORILLAZ	102
Hella Good	NO DOUBT	115
Days Go By	DIRTY VEGAS	127
Where's Your Head At?	BASEMENT JAXX	128
Hey Baby	NO DOUBT	130

HOT TRACKS 21.4

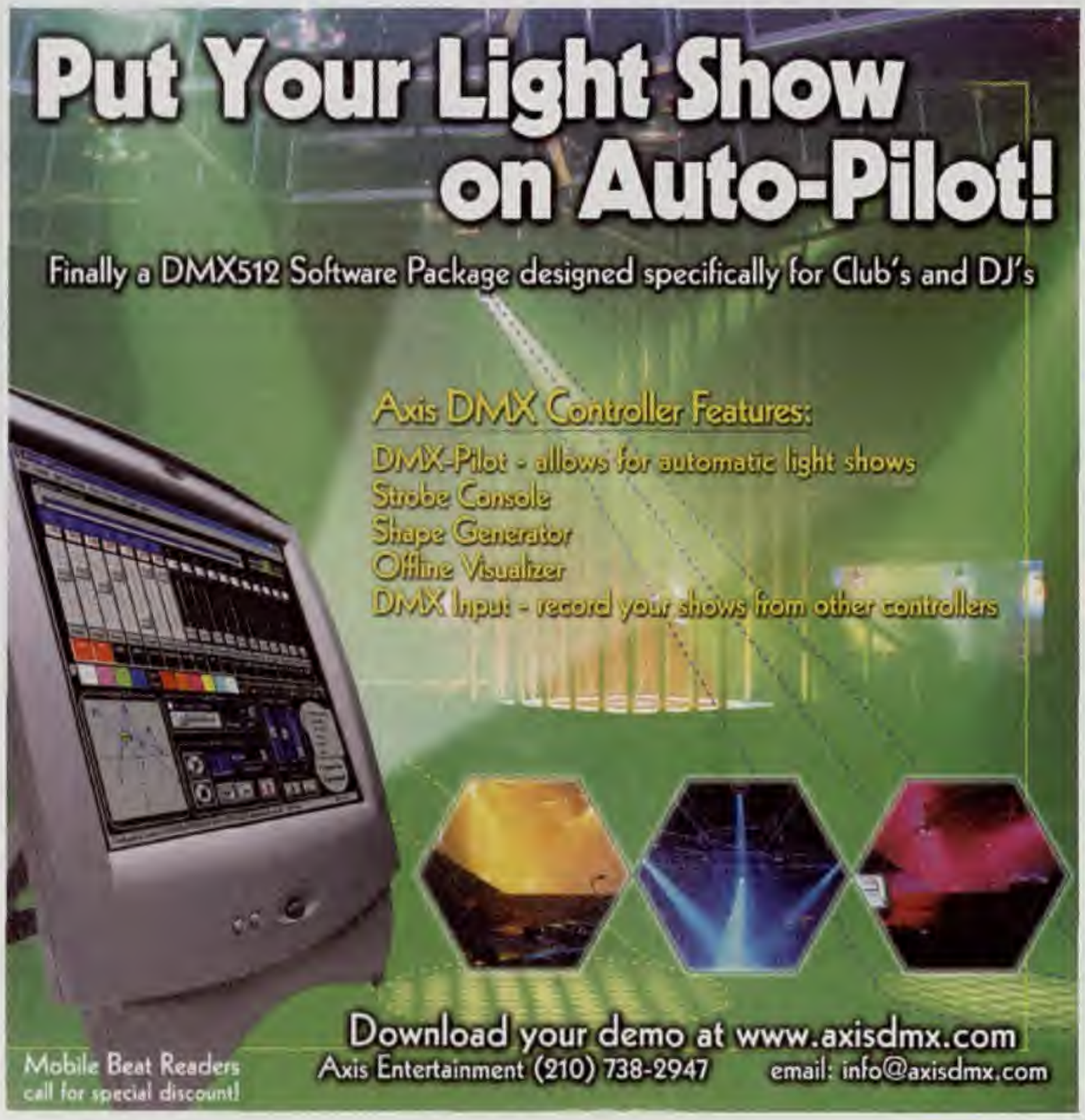
One Day In Your Life, Part I	ANASTACIA	119
One Day In Your Life Part II	ANASTACIA	130
Overprotected	BRITNEY SPEARS	96
Hella Good	NO DOUBT	115
Sugarhigh	JADE ANDERSON	127
Walking On Sunshine	JENNIFER LOPEZ	133

2001 Year-End Mega Mix Part 1 (various BPM)

a.	Drops of Jupiter	TRAIN
b.	Thank You	DIDO
c.	The Space Between	DAVE MATHEWS BAND
d.	Yellow	COLDPLAY
e.	Mad Season	MATCHBOX TWENTY
f.	Higher	CREED
g.	Again	LENNY KRAVITZ
h.	I'm Like a Bird	NELLY FURTADO
i.	Turn Off the Lights	NELLY FURTADO
j.	Wonderful	EVERCLEAR
k.	Drive	INCUBUS
l.	Only Time	ENYA

FUNKYMIX 60

Hot In Herre	NELLY	106
Awnow	NAPPY ROOTS	80
Addictive	TRUTH HURTS feat. RAKIM	100
One Mic	NAS	92
Without Me	EMINEM	112
I'm Gonna Be Alright	JENNIFER LOPEZ feat. NAS	94
Still Fly	BIG TYMERS	89
My Neck, My Back (Lick It)	KHIA feat. DSB	102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8. __ Kids From 2 to 22: Parties, Dances, Special Events
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11. __ The Video Dance Party
12. __ More Than the Macarena: Latin Music

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20. __ Getting Your Price: Part 2
21. __ Increasing Your Profits
22. __ Increasing Your Profits, Part II
23. __ Developing Your Entertainment Team
24. __ 99 Ideas for '99
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26. __ How to Expand Your Mobile DJ Operation
27. __ Single Operator Forum
28. __ Single for Life: The One Person Operation
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Holiday Music: What's the Occasion?

By Jay Maxwell

Give yourself a gift or a treat—get in tune with holiday tunes

It's amazing how soon in life we understand and appreciate the joy of celebrating the holidays. I quizzed my five-year-old daughter about the various holidays and she correctly answered each of my questions. I first asked her on which holiday we fly the flag, watch fireworks and celebrate our nation's independence. She knew it was the 4th of July. Next I asked her about the holiday when we dress in silly costumes and go door-to-door "trick-or-treating." My bright child knew exactly what occasion I was asking about. Finally, I asked her about the most important holiday of all. "On what special day do we bring a tree into the house, hang stockings by the fireplace and celebrate the birth of Jesus?" I said. Naturally, she replied, "Christmas." Then she asked if Santa was coming soon.

Certain images go with particular seasons. Everyone knows that Halloween is not complete without ghosts and goblins, jack-o-lanterns, and trick-or-treating. At the first sight of a Santa Claus or a brightly decorated fir tree, every child over two years old knows that Christmas will be coming soon (never soon enough for the children, always too quickly for the parents). Likewise, certain songs are played only at the appropriate holiday. No one would expect to hear "Away In a Manger" or "Deck the Halls" at the end of October, and if you are playing "The Monster Mash" in December you deserve all the icy stares that you are sure to receive.

'Tis the DJ season

Most of us look forward to Halloween and Christmas because of all the opportunities available to entertain. Christmas, or the "Holiday Season" as it is now called by the politically correct, is one of the most profitable periods of the year for most DJs. Businesses will book their events from the week after Thanksgiving all the way through the month of December. I have actually played for Christmas parties well into the month of January because companies simply could not find a place available during December or could not afford to take the time off during the busy shopping season. So for four to six weeks, both on weekends and during the week, expect businesses to book your services for their holiday events. In contrast, parties for Halloween are usually booked either on Halloween or the weekend before, leaving fewer DJ opportunities.

Another big difference between the two holidays is who does the booking. Schools or churches plan most Halloween events. (Many times they will rename the event the "Fall Festival" or "Harvest Ball.") While schools and churches also plan some of the Christmas parties, companies will host the vast majority of the events during that festive time.

A typical company holiday party in December will be at least a semi-formal event where you'll be expected to wear a tux. Most events will be between five and six hours in length. However, the time allotted for dance music is usually limited to only one to three hours. As guests are arriving, you will play Christmas songs in the background. (See this issue's list.) During dinner, you will shift to dinner-style music such as the holiday albums by Kenny G. or selections by Mannheim Steamroller. After dinner expect some speeches from the CEO of the company, some door prizes and some awards to be given to the employees. After all the formalities are over, then the dancing can begin. Each company, of course, will want to conduct the event differently, so always ask what the order of the night will be and offer any assistance necessary with announcing the events and helping to conduct any door prize drawings.

Halloween parties are always very casual. Ask if you are expected to dress in a costume. From the start of the show, you will play party music. And you'll usually be doing a lot of microphone work, making numerous announcements about contests and games. Typically you will also be asked to help in the costume-judging contest. I recommend never volunteering to be one of the judges; just assist by doing a short interview with the contestants.

Each Halloween, a couple of compilation CDs are released that will contain most of the songs listed on the Halloween list in this article. Of

Charting Holiday Success

It's interesting to see how many times some of the favorite holiday songs have appeared on the Billboard Top 100 Charts. Most songs appear only once on the charts. They rise and fall from the chart never to appear again. One exception is Boris Pickett's "Monster Mash," which went to number one in 1962 and then appeared again in 1970 and 1973 (breaking into the Top 10 in 1973). "Jingle Bell Rock" hit the charts on five separate occasions and Brenda Lee sent listeners "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree" three times. However, "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby has had an incredible run on the Billboard Charts, making appearances nine different times. Even though the highest chart position was number seven, "White Christmas" was the biggest selling single of all time until 1997, when Elton John's remake of "Candle in the Wind" in tribute to Princess Diana surpassed it in sales.

course we all know that there are hundreds of CDs released and re-released each season with the holiday favorites we all sing and hear each December. While there have been several great compilations over the years, the best one is the two-CD collection *Now That's What I Call Christmas*. This is the most complete 36-song set I have ever found. It contains almost all the songs necessary to satisfy one's need to hear their favorite Christmas selection.

Although it is *important to* have a good selection of the right songs to help celebrate the holidays, it is also important to have the right mix of music. It's hard to dance to most of the selections in these lists. So, when the dancing is to begin, make sure that you know when it's time to switch to the standard "non-holiday" tunes. Also remember that a bride and groom will have only one wedding, but a company will have a holiday party every year. If you do an outstanding job, you can count on repeat business for years to come. •

Halloween Monster Hits

1.	Monster Mash	BOBBY "BORIS" PICKETT
2.	Thriller	MICHAEL JACKSON
3.	Ghostbusters	RAY PARKER JR.
4.	Time Warp	ROCKY HORROR SOUNDTRACK
5.	Werewolves of London	WARREN ZEVON
6.	Addams Groove	HAMMER
7.	Bad Moon Rising	CCR
8.	Witch Doctor	DAVID SEVILLE
9.	Superstition	STEVIE WONDER
10.	Nightmare On My Street	WILL SMITH
11.	Love Potion # 9	SEARCHERS, CLOVERS
12.	Purple People Eater	SHEB WOOLEY
13.	Haunted House	GENE SIMMONS
14.	Black Magic Woman	SANTANA
15.	Witchy Woman	EAGLES
16.	Legend of Wooley Swamp	CHARLIE DANIELS BAND
17.	Spooky	CLASSICS IV, ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION
18.	Devil Went Down to Georgia	CHARLIE DANIELS BAND
19.	Martian Hop	RAN-DELLS
20.	Season of the Witch	DONOVAN

Frightening Sound Bites

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2.	Toccata & Fugue in D Minor	J.S. BACH
3.	Halloween Theme	MOVIE SOUNDTRACK
4.	Addams Family Theme	MOVIE SOUNDTRACK
5.	Alfred Hitchcock Presents Theme	TV SOUNDTRACK
6.	Jaws Theme	MOVIE SOUNDTRACK
7.	Twilight Zone Theme	TV SOUNDTRACK

Christmas Party Classics

1.	White Christmas	BING CROSBY
2.	Jingle Bell Rock	BOBBY HELMS
3.	Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree	BRENDA LEE
4.	The Christmas Song	NAT KING COLE
5.	Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town	BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
6.	Little Saint Nick	BEACH BOYS
7.	Blue Christmas	ELVIS PRESLEY
8.	Christmas in Dixie	ALABAMA
9.	Feliz Navidad	JOSE FELICIANO
10.	Please Come Home For Christmas	CHARLES BROWN, EAGLES
11.	Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer	ELMO & PATSY
12.	I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus	JOHN MELLENCAMP
13.	Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!	DEAN MARTIN
14.	Merry Christmas Darling	CARPENTERS
15.	Silent Night	GARTH BROOKS
16.	Winter Wonderland	TONY BENNETT
17.	The Gift	JIM BRICKMAN
18.	Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas	PRETENDERS, JUDY GARLAND
19.	Do They Know It's Christmas?	BAND AID
20.	The Most Wonderful Time of the Year	JOHNNY MATHIS
21.	Little Drummer Boy/Peace On Earth	BING CROSBY & DAVID BOWIE
22.	A Holly Jolly Christmas	BURL IVES
23.	Rudolph, The Red-Nosed Reindeer	GENE AUTRY
24.	Happy Xmas (War Is Over)	JOHN LENNON & YOKO ONO
25.	Sleigh Ride	ELLA FITZGERALD, DEBBIE GIBSON

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Back to Life!

By Fred Sebastian

When it comes to getting people out on the dance floor, it sometimes feels like you're trying to raise the dead. Lucky for us there have been countless compilation CDs put together over the years to help remove a bit of the guesswork in picking the right songs. Odds are very good that any one of these compilations will have what it takes to bring your crowd to life and keep the dance floor hopping.

Lots of compilations claim to be the best collections of their kind, but to sell on TV that can't be an empty promise. Mainstream appeal, top names, and hit favorites are what make these compilations stand out. THE GREATEST DANCE ALBUM UNDER THE SUN! has all these key elements. "As sold on TV," this two-CD set is loaded with 40 popular club and dance tracks that have filled the floors in the '80s, '90s and today.

Got Myself Together (Hustlers Convention Radio Edit) ..... KENNY DOPE w/ THE BUCKETHEADS
Boombastic ..... SHAGGY
Ain't No Love (Ain't No Use) ..... SUB SUB w/ MELANIE WILLIAMS
Too Hot ..... COOLIO
Naughty North, Sexy South (Naughty But NiceEdit) ..... E-MOTION
Movin' On Up ..... M PEOPLE
Sex On The Streets ..... PIZZAMAN
I Wanna Give You Devotion ..... NOMAD
The Real Thing ..... 2 UNLIMITED
Mr. Wendal (Perfecto Mix) ..... ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT
Rhythm Of The Night ..... CORONA
You Got The Love ..... THE SOURCE w/ CANDY STATON
Don't Stop (Wiggle Wiggle) ..... THE OUTHERE BROTHERS
Keep Warm ..... JINNY
Boom! Shake The Room ..... JAZZY JEFF AND THE FRESH PRINCE
I Believe ..... HAPPY CLAPPERS
U Sure Do ..... STRIKE
Ride On Time ..... BLACK BOX
Short Short Man ..... 20 FINGERS w/ GILLETTE
Last Train To Trancentral (Live From The Lost Continent) ..... THE KLF

AND MORE...

Disco classics continue to make their mark with party goers old and young, so the title of this gem of a compilation is fitting. STAYING ALIVE VOL.2 not only includes outstanding disco favorites but it also is a great find for collectors, as most of the hits in this compilation are the original full-length (12") extended versions and most of which have gone out of print long ago. An excellent collection of disco gold.

Can't Take My Eyes Off Of You ..... BOBBY BROWN
Axel F (Short Stab) ..... CLOCK
Shelter Me (Dancing Divaz Mix) ..... CIRCUIT
You Bring Me Joy (Pukka Mix) ..... RHYTHM FACTOR
Another Star (Joe T. Dubby Vocal Mix) ..... KATHY SLEDGE
What Hope Have I (Serious Rope Mix) ..... SPHINX
Message Of Love (C.J.'s Original Club Mix) ..... LOVE HAPPY
Spirit Inside (Serious Rope Dub) ..... SPIRITS
Sight For Sore Eyes (ESmoove Mix) ..... M PEOPLE
Rockin' My Body (Primax "Nu En-ergy" Mix) ..... 49ERS w/ ANN-MARIE SMITH
The Climax ..... CARL GRAIG w/ PAPERCLIP PEOPLE
Embracing The Sunshine (Sasha's Remix Edit) ..... B.T.
Every Time You Touch Me (Uplifting Mix) ..... MOBY
Poison (Rat Poison Mix) ..... THE PRODIGY
Another Night (US Armands Nightmare Mix) ..... MC SAR & THE REAL McCOY
Yeke Yeke (Hardfloor Mix) ..... MORY KANTE

BOYSTOWN GANG
I Wanna Dance ..... KAT MANDU
Shake Shake Shake Shake Your Booty ..... KC & THE SUNSHINE BAND
So Many Men, So Little Time ..... MIQUEL BROWN
Come To Me ..... FRANCE JOLI
Shame Shame Shame ..... SHIRLEY & CO.
Midnight Love Affair ..... CAROL DOUGLAS
Lady Bump ..... PENNY McLEAN
Unexpected Lovers ..... LIME
High Energy ..... EVELYN THOMAS
Let's All Chant ..... MICHAEL ZAEGER BAND

When it comes to the best dance music, there are some tracks that continue to be favored anthems, loved and recognized instantly by most everyone. Surely a must for any collection is the 17-track compilation I'M COMING OUT—nothing less than an invitation to party.

It's Raining Men ..... WEATHERGIRLS
I Am What I Am ..... GLORIA GAYNOR
Celebration ..... KOOL & THE GANG
Hit'n Run Lover ..... CAROL JIANI
Let's Whip It Up ..... SLEASESISTERS
So Many Men, So Little Time ..... MIQUEL BROWN
I'll Respect You ..... DEBBIE JOHNSON
Dancing Queen ..... ABBA
Memories ..... NETZWERK
Constant Craving ..... ABIGAIL
Free To Be ..... RUPAUL
Sinful Wishes ..... OUTTA CONTROL w/ KON KAN
America (I Love America) ..... FULL INTENTION
YMCA ..... VILLAGE PEOPLE
Dirty Love ..... LONNIE GORDON
Savin' Myself ..... ERIA FACHIN
I'll Just Say Goodnight ..... CAROL MEDINA

The club scene certainly has its share of hits that stand the test of time. The two CDs of CLUB CLASS contain recurring club/house hits and also feature mostly hard-to-find original extended versions and club remixes.

Respect (Roger Sanchez Mix) ..... JUDY CHEEKS
U Sure Do (Raise The Roof Mix) ..... STRIKE
Don't Give Me Your Life (Dancing Divaz Mix) ..... ALEX PARTY
Push The Feeling On (MK 95 Mix) ..... NIGHT CRAWLERS
Always Something There To Remind Me (Original Mix) ..... TIN TIN OUT w/ ESPIRITU
Reach Up (Papa's Got A Brand New Pig Bag) (Perfecto Remix) ..... PERFECTO ALLSTARZ
Two Can Play That Game (K Klassik Mix) .....

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As vocal entertainment evolves, KJs have to adapt or become extinct

21st Century Song:

Will Karaoke Survive?

By Greg Tutwiler

Christine Wagenblass

Karaoke has its roots in the Far East, emerging in the early '80s from a nightclub in Kobe City, Japan. The story (or perhaps legend) goes, that a guitarist could not arrive one night for his scheduled engagement. Not wanting to disappoint his dining guests, the club owner recorded some musical accompaniments on tape for the crowd to sing along to. It was such a hit that bar after bar picked up the contagious pastime.

True or not, karaoke has become a cultural staple in Japan as well as the United States. And in the past ten years countries like Korea, China, Southeast Asia, Australia and Europe have accounted for the highest number of karaoke sales. This entertainment phenomenon has changed the way we look at recreation.

Is the song fading out?

But in the past eight to ten months the karaoke scene seems to have changed. This is part of an e-mail I received recently: "...I've been hosting karaoke shows for ten years with pretty good success. At one time I had six shows a week. Now I'm down to one show a week with two systems mothballed in the garage. Others I've talked to have similar stories. What's going on? Is karaoke dying out? Is the ride over?"

I must admit this e-mail didn't surprise me. I too have heard stories of KJs throwing in the towel for lack of work. I've asked myself the same questions. Is it really as bad as it seems? After some research, I've come up with information that supports anything but an end to karaoke.

I took a little trip around town recently, investigating rumors that you can find karaoke supplies in big department stores. Retailers like Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Toys 'R' Us and Target, all have several different styles of CDG players and a decent selection of karaoke CDs. Even the toy aisles offer sing-along aids. One manufacturer, Singing Machine, projects sales of over one million karaoke machines this year alone. A department store clerk told me that karaoke machines were one of their hottest items this past Christmas season. In general, sales of karaoke related merchandise have increased. And in some cases, manufacturers have seen their lines expand.

Solid products survive and thrive

Another company that has been there almost from the beginning of karaoke in the U.S. sees a bright future ahead for the sing along sport. Sound Choice was founded by brothers Kurt and Derek Slep in 1985, in a small apartment in Charlotte, North Carolina. The company evolved from a franchise of theme park recording booths. While they had a large library of tunes to choose from, they were getting an increasing number of requests for songs that they didn't have. The Sleps saw an opportunity to branch out and fill a growing need. They sold the franchise, and birthed one of today's leading karaoke software companies.

Seventeen years later, Sound Choice operates from a 25,000-square foot, $2 million facility just south of Charlotte. They have seventy employees that staff the studios, production, manufacturing, graphics and marketing departments, as well as employing in-house musicians and singers. They own the licenses to over 12,000 songs, and hold over 40% of the market share of the karaoke industry with retail sales topping $18 million last year.

In spite of the weakened economy, Sound Choice is seeing growth. They are set to launch a new line of products for the retail shelf in an exclusive venture with Radio Shack. They have developed a new line of CDGs, The Performers Choice, to fill the growing consumer niche of home enthusiasts. It appears that instead of slowing down, karaoke has shifted from an almost exclusively night club outlet, to a very

accessible consumer commodity. Now, singers own their own discs, machines, and in some cases, complete systems for their own personal satisfaction.

Changing key

So while some KJs are seeing their club crowds dwindle, the consumer market is swelling. One KJ saw it this way; "I had a very big following, but the crowd was pretty nerdy as far as bar patrons go. Most of them didn't drink (alcohol), didn't smoke, and really didn't like hanging around that kind of environment. As soon as they figured out that they could buy their own stuff, they started having private weekly parties in smoke and alcohol-free clubrooms. When I lost two club gigs for lack of participation, I decided I either needed to join them or give up. I set up camp in a local coffee house, and within weeks we were packed. The shop owner was happy because he was selling more coffee and donuts on a Tuesday night than ever before. The crowd is well-behaved, and we're all having fun."

> ...KJs have to offer singers something they can't do for themselves. It's pretty hard to create a live stage feel in your basement.

Now that it's relatively easy for consumers to do it themselves, we KJs have to begin to offer the singers something they can't do for themselves. It's pretty hard to create a live stage feel in your basement. Add some lights, or stage props, or costumes for the singers to use while they sing. Videotape the performance or broadcast it on a wide-screen TV. I spoke with one KJ who actually purchased a one-watt broadcast license. He broadcasts every karaoke show he does live on the radio. "Singers go out in the parking lot and listen to each other, or record themselves on a boom box." It's the novelty of it that keeps them excited about it, he says.

Diversity

The days of the "dry" karaoke show are over. A karaoke show today needs to be more than just assembly line singing. It needs excitement and added entertainment value. It's time to think out of the box and swim in the same stream as the consumer. If they are not coming to where you are, it's time to go to them. Arenas like shopping malls, car dealerships, lawn parties, county fairs, coffee shops, strip shopping center parking lots, and retirement community centers are all golden opportunities waiting for the first innovative KJ to come along. Think "Event" instead of just "karaoke show." Think "Stage Performance" instead of just "sing-along." Take your show to the next level. Become a promoter or producer as well as a KJ. It's going to be the flash, sizzle and creativity that maintain the karaoke fan base of the twenty-first century. •

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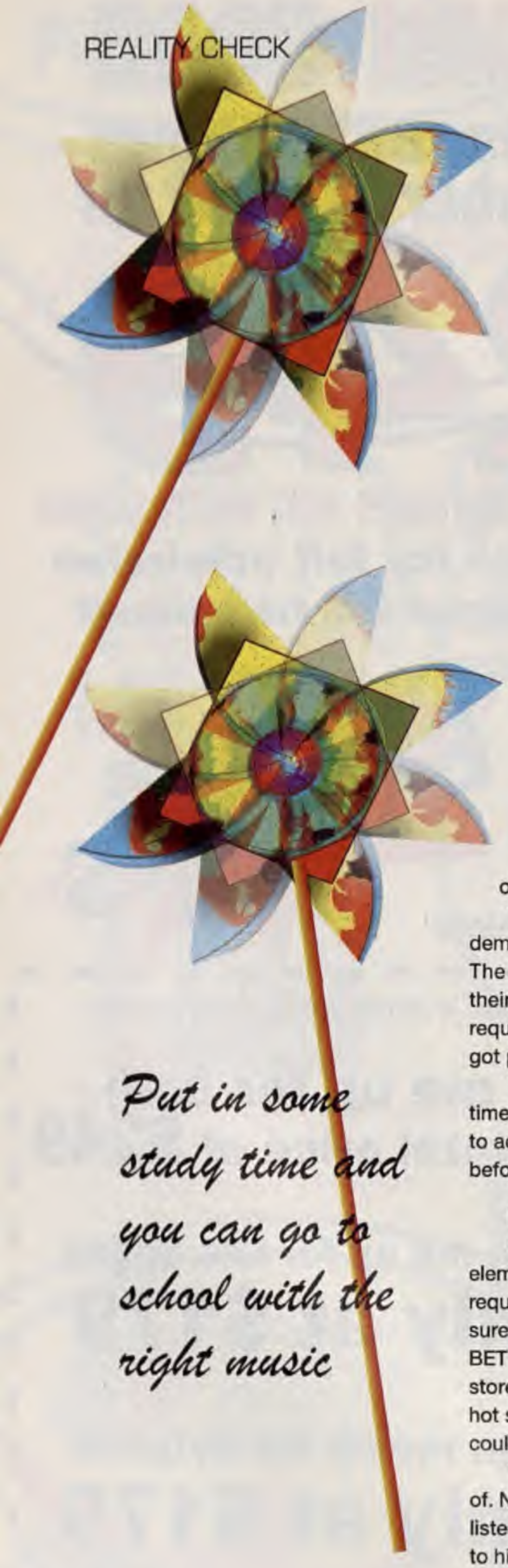

Put in some study time and you can go to school with the right music

Youth Events and the Challenge of Popular Music

By Mark Johnson

No other event has a greater requirement for up-to-date music than the school dance. While other events may fea- ture a few new songs, they are typically chock full of more classic, standard DJ music. School dances are very unique.

The biggest challenge is keeping up with the new music. This challenge is demanding both in money and the time necessary to deliver a successful dance. The money aspect is the investment in many songs that have not yet proven their value, just to be able to have those songs available should they be requested. We have all spent countless dollars purchasing songs that either never got played or had a useful life measured in minutes.

The time spent on keeping up is another major factor. You can spend a lot of time attempting to identify which songs may be useful and additional time trying to acquire those songs. For a three-hour dance, you may spend many hours beforehand just making sure that you are completely prepared.

Musical pop quiz

I'm going to go out on a limb here. For every school dance I experience an element of apprehension that I will not have some of the songs the kids will request. Sure, I do my homework (no pun intended) during the week prior. I'll make sure that my subscription series discs are up-to-date. I'll watch MTV and TRL, or BET a few nights to "tune into my audience" (a prior article). I'll visit the local music store to catch any late-breaking songs. I'll visit www.billboard.com to print their hot sheets for reference at the dance. I'll do everything possible to achieve what could be called a "high confidence factor" preparing for this dance.

Then wham, from out of nowhere, a few requests come in that I've never heard of. Not just the songs, but the artists as well. It's not unusual to have the kids listening to an entire CD by a popular artist and be into hit #5 when radio is only up to hit #4—I can usually get by playing one of the existing four hits. But these unknown artist and song combinations come to me completely out of left field.

I'm in a bit of a pickle. I don't want to appear out of touch with the kids' music yet I truly don't know the artist or song. But I am honest and I ask them where they heard

it. Their answer usually falls into one of a few categories:

College Radio. This has always been the mecca of the "cooler than thou" music, whereby the listeners are hearing the most cutting-edge material that's gliding just under the commercial (major record label) music radar. Granted, some artists rise from these beginnings to popularity, most notably The Dave Matthews Band, but most of the time they have their fleeting brush with fame in college radio and disappear forever.

Local Music. The New York City, Long Island and Jersey Shore areas play home to many live and recording bands that the rest of the country has never heard of. Sometimes the buzz at the local record store makes these "circuit" bands appear like the next Bruce Springsteen, but most of the time they're local favorites and that's it. Ever hear of Brian Kirk & The Jerks, Trigger or Angel? I didn't think so. Many regions around the country have this kind of "regional" music.

Older Siblings' Influence. When 7th graders ask for Hendrix or the Grateful Dead, you can guess where they found out about those songs. If an older sibling is in college or visits home on occasion, he or she can expose new music to these kids. Given the "gee Wally" effect, the younger kid will try to be cool by listening to this music.

Purposely Non-Radio Hits. Lots of urban requests come from the street as well, especially if they contain explicit lyrics or are from artists that radio typically shuns. BET is fine, but even some songs slip in under their radar.

I'm sure that there are a few more sources for these non-hits but you get the picture. You cannot be in all places at all times to catch the freshest music that your audience does.

Learning from experience

Earlier I mentioned a "high confidence factor." I truly believe that I'm as prepared as I can be when I perform for each school dance. During each dance, and every other event as well, I retain all the request cards of songs that I don't have. When I get home I transcribe them onto an index card with the date of that dance/event. If it's a school dance, I become somewhat focused on trying to acquire these missing songs as the next dance at a similar school may see requests for them as well. If it's a different event, then I'll visit my non-portable collection of music to see if I should bring it.

I've retained all these index cards over the years to re-read the songs that at one time I didn't have. Sometimes I got totally blindsided with a major hit that I just didn't have. But most of the time these songs were such a minor flash in the pan that the artists were never heard from again.

Alternative ways to make the grade

In another article I mentioned the ability to offer up alternate songs to match requests for songs you didn't have. This can work for many genres of music, contemporary music being no exception. Chances are if the person requesting this unknown music can offer up some other songs, then that person would be happy that you played at least one of their requests.

Another element that may lessen the tragedy of missing these songs is that the general population of a school dance may not be into that particular unknown group, song or style. Unless you have a portion of the dance dedicated to breaking this music (highly unlikely), you still need to play to the school's average style of music and never need this unknown song anyway.

One school I play for often has developed a tradition that the first half-hour is for the requests that I usually wouldn't play later. The overall tone of the school is urban, contemporary dance music yet the requests for unknown and contrary songs are welcome in the first 30 minutes. Metallica, Skynyrd and The Doors won't mix well with J-Lo and No Diggity songs during the regular dance, but the kids wanting those songs appreciate not being completely ignored. In fact, they've learned to show up early to get their songs played.

So my confidence factor remains high even though I will never bat 1.000 in this game. I may not know this music as well as the kids, but having the songs and working from their requests, I can manage a 98% fulfillment and continue to perform successfully for school dances.• ●

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This.	Last	Artist	Title	Label
1	1	Dirty Vegas	Days Go By	Capitol
2	3	Anastacia	One Day in Your Life	Epic/Daylight
3	8	Amber	Need to Be Naked	Tommy Boy
4	4	No Doubt	Hella Good	Interscope
5	10	Kylie Mingoue	Love at First Sight	Capitol
6	2	Sheryl Crow	Soak Up the Sun	A&M
7	11	DB Boulevard	Point Of View	Epic
8	16	Mary J Blige	Rainy Dayz	MCA
9	12	X Press 2 f/ David Byrne	Lazy	Columbia
10	6	DJ Sammy and Yanou	Heaven	Robbins
11	7	Angie Stone	I Wish I Didn't Miss You	J Records
12	5	Res	They Say Vision	MCA
13	34	DJ Encore	Walking In The Sky	MCA
14	35	DJ Tiesto	In My Memory	Nettwerk
15	40	Anastacia	Boom	Sony Import
16	9	Shakira	Underneath Your Clothes	Epic
17	13	Brandy	Full Moon	Atlantic
18	31	Moby	We Are All Made of Stars	V2
19	19	Cher	Music's No Good Without You	Warner
20	15	Ian Van Dahl	Will I	Robbins
21	NE	Cher	Different Kind of Love Song	Warner
22	38	Rosabel	That Sound	Tommy Boy Silver
23	NE	Jennifer Lopez	Alive	Epic
24	NE	Paulina Rubio	Don't Say Goodbye	Universal
25	28	Erin Hamilton	I Got The Music In Me	Jungle Red
26	17	Pink	Don't Let Me Get Me	Arista
27	14	Celine Dion	A New Day Has Come	Sony
28	20	Dolce	Fire	Tommy Boy
29	32	Frou Frou	Breathe In	MCA
30	27	Becca	Come And Get My Love	Cutting
31	36	Suzanne Palmer	Show Me	*69
32	NE	Kim English	Treat Me Right	Nervous
33	47	Network 25	DJ	Robbins
34	26	Kevin Aviance	Alive	Emerge
35	NE	Widelife vs Thunderpuss	Six Feet Under	Nervous
36	NE	Oakenfold	Southern Sun	Maverick
37	18	Enrique Iglesias	Escape	Interscope
38	30	Way Out West	Mindcircus	Nettwerk
39	NE	Moony	Dove	Positiva (UK)
40	42	Billie Ray Martin	Systems Of Silence	Sonnenstahl/JVM
41	21	Tweet	Oops	(Oh My!)
42	29	Perpetuous Dreamer	Sound of Goodbye	Nervous
43	41	Dynamix ft. Inda Matrix	No Man Can Tame Me	Kult
44	NE	Marc et Claude	Tremble	Radikal
45	49	Alicia Keys	Butterfly	J
46	NE	Sono	Blame	Groovilicious
47	48	Pet Shop Boys	Home & Dry	Sanctuary
48	NE	Nicole McCloud	Searchin'	Artemis
49	44	Shakedown	At Night	Panorama (UK)
50	NE	Kreo-	Burn 4 You	Groovilicious

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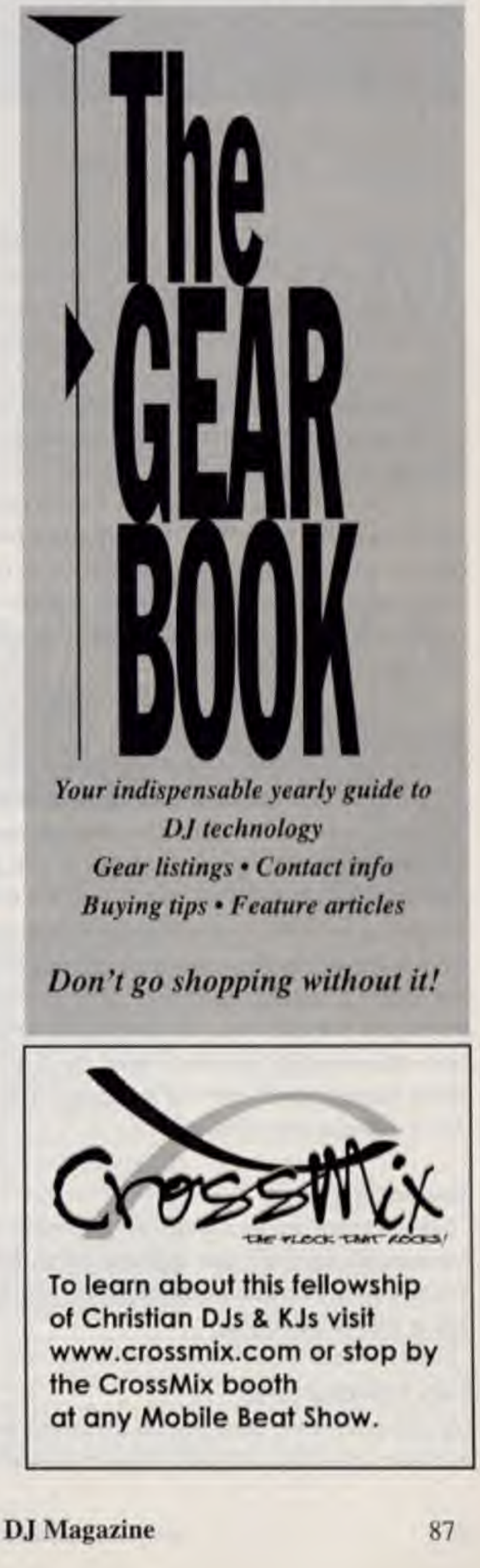

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DJ 101: The First Day of Class

Tips for getting started in the wide DJ world

By DJ Ankur Pal

Maybe you've seen your friends spinning their turntables at all the house parties, or you've been to the clubs and have felt the walls pounding, or you've been to the outdoor shows and performances and have heard the music from a block away.

Perhaps you've said to yourself, "I'd like to be a DJ," or even wondered whether or not you had the aptitude to become a disc jockey.

First, I'd like to clear up any misconceptions about the meaning of the term "DJ." Many people believe that a DJ is anyone who simply "spins" vinyl or CDs. This is definitely an incomplete picture of a profession that involves a unique combination of performance skills, music programming ability, and business savvy.

What is a DJ?

As an event host, a DJ's primary goals are to play music to add spark to the event, to delight the guests and to get people moving on the dance floor. DJs utilize a variety of media to play music, including compact discs, LPs, tapes, mini discs, and more recently, MP3s, in conjunction with computer programs for mixing with a laptop. There are many types of DJs: Mobile DJs, club DJs, scratch DJs, techno/rave DJs, basement DJs, radio DJs, and I personally believe even sound managers are DJs. They all play music to entertain the crowd. I take offense when someone asks me "Cool, you're a DJ?! What do you spin?" without realizing the full scope of what I do to entertain the crowd.

Becoming a DJ

I believe there are four steps to becoming a DJ. You don't necessarily have to have all these attributes to get started successfully, but with motivation and practice you can develop into a true professional.

Step 1: Background

Do you possess a background in music? DJs appreciate music and love listening to it, but it's even easier to get started when you also have a background in music. Piano lessons at a young age, participating in the school choir, or even taking singing lessons, can all be foundations for success. These all expose a person to the world of music, helping to build an understanding of how music flows and fits together. You don't have to have a background in music, but it helps. If you're willing to work hard and to put in an additional effort to learn the principles of music, then you'll increase your chances for success.

Step 2: What type of DJ do you want to be?

Once you've established whether or not you possess a musical background as an asset, the next phase is to decide what type of DJ you'd like to be. In my case, I started DJing as a hobby. I was a sound manager for a local performance group, and I studied the principles of sound and professional audio systems. This ignited my interest in pro speakers and audio systems, which led me to wider interests in performance. I started to DJ various school dances and other events using my own speakers and equipment, and shortly after started my own business.

Mobile DJs host events such as weddings, banquets, and school dances, club and techno DJs play dance music in clubs, radio DJs entertain over the radio, basement DJs like to play and mix music as a hobby (and perhaps host some friends' parties), scratch DJs play in clubs and at competitive events ("battles") and rave DJs mix at large dance events. DJing is not limited to one specific style, but we will be speaking mainly of Mobile DJs.

Step 3: Do the research

To learn about DJing, the industry, the equipment, etc., there are many resources you can use. Go to your local library, bookstore or search online for books and tapes on developing DJ skills, business skills and using audio and lighting equipment. Most DJ stores also carry a wide selection of reading material. DJ magazines are, of course, a great source of information. *Mobile Beat* is geared towards helping DJs at all levels develop their performance, programming and business abilities. Later, seminars and DJ conferences

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like the Mobile Beat DJ Show will provide great opportunities to build your knowledge.

Talk to DJs and others involved in the DJ industry; you can learn quite a bit from others who've been there already. I recall when I first laid eyes upon a magnificent speaker system I had heard in a store. I knew nothing about speakers or audio principles. But ever since that day, I strived to learn as much as I could about pro audio, and kept reading various material and product specs, and once I knew enough I purchased those speakers.

You're bound to make avoidable mistakes if you skip the research part, and attempt to go directly to a level that you are simply not ready for. A simple example of this is purchasing equipment. Suppose a wannabe DJ wants to buy a fantastic looking mixer. It's silver, has a lot of buttons, switches, faders and knobs, but he has no clue as to how mixers work, their functions, their pros and cons, etc. What good is this mixer to him?

This brings us to a point: Don't try to get from A to B too fast, or from point A to point C, omitting point B. Remember that story about the tortoise and the hare? Work hard and diligently at becoming a DJ, but don't expect to turn out a success in a few months. It takes a while, sometimes years, to become a great DJ, depending on your background and your interest level.

Step 4: Equipment

From visiting a mixture of DJ message boards and talking to various people, I have found that many believe that you should buy the best equipment to start out.

Well, I believe that having the best equipment does not necessarily make you the best DJ. Analogous to the mixer example above, suppose someone aspiring to be a DJ purchased all the high-end equipment available. The dilemma is, that he or she has the best equipment available, but doesn't know how to use it. That is why someone that has done the research, and has purchased mid-level equipment, knows how to make the best use of the equipment.

When becoming a DJ or starting up your own mobile disc jockey service, you are faced with three scenarios: 1) purchase expensive, high-quality equipment; 2) purchase standard, cost-efficient and reliable equipment; or 3) rent while you grow. There is no point in purchasing expensive gear when you host zero gigs. If you think you can make up the amount you spend through the gigs you perform, then by all means, purchase the best equipment.

It is up to you how you would like to develop your skills and your business. I found my knowledge and productivity grew quickly by researching and purchasing workable gear and learning how to use it in depth. Once I had more than an average understanding of the gear, and I had saved up enough money, I sold my mid-range gear and purchased high quality gear. This may or may not be your ideal scenario.

Another option is renting the equipment. If you would like to be cost effective, you can simply rent equipment from your nearest music rental shop, and actually earn a whole lot more than if you purchased gear. Another cost-effective solution is to hook up with a company whose job it is to provide sound systems for various events. You simply inform them of the location and time of your event, and they come and set up their own equipment there for a fee. Once your event finishes, they come and retrieve their gear.

In conclusion: the beginning

There aren't any definite rules that determine the success of an aspiring DJ, but the best way to get your foot in the door is by telling people about your services. Word-of-mouth is the fastest form of communication. Soon you'll be getting calls for your first gigs. Check out *Mobile Beat* regularly for further guidance on developing your marketing approach.

If there's one thing to remember, it's not to give up. Keep trying and practicing, despite what others tell you, and create a mental goal of where you would like to be, given a specified amount of time. You may have heard this advice many times before in respect to many situations, but the reason you hear it so often, is because it's true. Good luck.•

DJ Ankur Pal is the owner of Ambient Sounds Disc Jockey Services of Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

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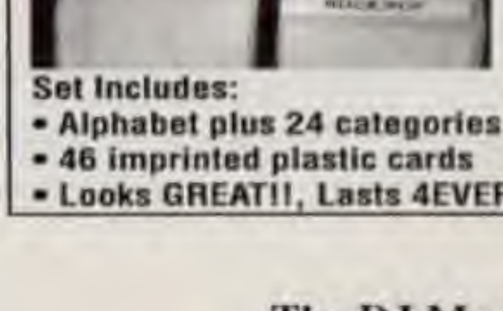

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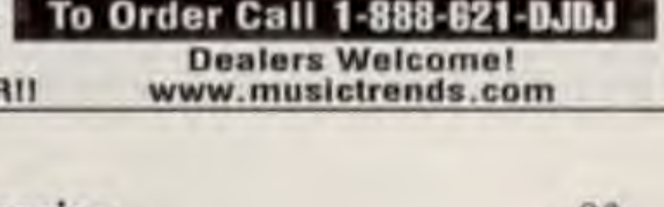

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Avoiding Online Auction Fraud

By Reid Goldsborough

How are you at resisting temptation?

Imagine a scenario where you can lie, cheat, and steal virtually carte blanche, where a sucker and his money are always being parted, and where your actions are limited only by your ethics or lack of them. This is one side of the world of online auctions. It's the Wild West out there, huge and still largely ungoverned.

Online auctions are the playing field of the conscience. How far will you go in promoting your interests? How dark will you tint the gray as you traverse the expanse that separates truth and falsity?

The good news is that, according to my experience and that of many others, there's far, far more good than evil out there. The bad news is that there's evil out there. This truth may be as old as the hills, but it's a truth you need to keep in mind if you venture into the always fascinating and frequently rewarding realm of online auctions.

What's your number?

The big three online auction houses are eBay (www.ebay.com), Yahoo Auctions (http://auctions.yahoo.com), and Amazon.com Auctions (http://auctions.amazon.com), with eBay being far larger than Yahoo Auctions and Amazon.com Auctions combined.

Industry leader eBay contends that the rate of auction fraud on its service is very low. It says that only one "confirmed" fraud occurs per 40,000 eBay listings. That is indeed a low rate—0.0025 percent.

The FBI, on the other hand, contends that the figure is much higher. As a part of its "Operation Cyber Loss" project, it determined that the rate of online auction fraud is about one in a hundred, or 1 percent. This is a very high rate of fraud—a whopping 400 times higher than what eBay contends.

The FBI's figure is the one to believe. eBay, whose earnings soared again in its latest quarter, to $47.6 million, is very reluctant to intervene in individual auctions, describing its service as merely a venue that brings buyers and sellers together. Its policy is that it won't interfere with the auction of a blatantly counterfeit collectible, for instance, unless it's contacted first by law enforcement authorities.

Watch out for the rackets

All the online auction services provide buyers and sellers with some protection against fraud. The most powerful is "feedback"—a way for participants in a transaction to rate one another and for others to see those ratings.

But the ratings are always skewed positively, since leaving someone with negative feedback opens you up to receiving retaliatory negative feedback in return, and most people are reluctant to risk tarnishing their feedback record this way. Still, a large number of negative feedbacks is a clear signal to stay away from a particular buyer or seller.

You should definitely avoid buying a big-ticket item from a seller with few feedbacks. But buying a more expensive item from a seller with many feedbacks can still be risky. One trick that scammers use is to sell a number of low-cost items to build up positive feedback, then auction off a big-ticket item and skip town, virtually or otherwise, without sending it. It's always best when buying an expensive item to make sure that the seller has sold similar items in the past.

Mike Woodard Sr. of East Hampton, Massachusetts, recently paid $300 for a set of old silver dollars through an eBay auction, only to have the seller not deliver. Too often victims in these situations chalk it up as a learning experience, thus causing most online auction frauds to go unreported. In this instance, however, Woodard took action.

He contacted his local police department, which, unlike most, has a new Internet fraud department. After Woodard presented his evidence, his police department contacted the police department local to the seller, who was from out of state. The seller was arrested and pleaded guilty, and Woodard is now awaiting restitution.

Spin city

More frequently, abuses arise when sellers misrepresent their items, exaggerating positives and ignoring negatives. The overly positive spin has always been a part of advertising practices, and it's easy for sellers to get caught up in this even when they're not intending to deceive.

You should ask the seller for clarification beforehand if you have any doubts and refuse to bid if you don't get a satisfactory answer.

Ultimately, with online auctions, knowledge is power. Arm yourself with information like this, and you'll greatly lessen your chances of getting duped. You can find more at the following Web sites:

Auction Watch's Tips and Tactics
www.auctionwatch.com/awdaily/tipsandtactics/index2.html

Internet Fraud Complaint Center's Fraud Tips
www1.ifccfbi.gov/strategy/fraudtips.asp

The Federal Trade Commission's "Internet Auctions: A Guide for Buyers and Sellers"
www.ftc.gov/bcp/menu-internet.htm

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway. He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or www.netaxs.com/~reidgold/column.

Less Excitement, More Assurance

Once you venture into the online auction world, the excitement of sealing a sweet deal can quickly become addictive. Besides the obvious eBay, there are many audio gear-specific auction sites. Digibid (www.digibid.com) and Musichotbid (www.musichotbid.com) are probably the two largest.

If you don't want to take some of the chances inherent in the online auction world, however, online retailers are waiting to take your orders for new and used items. They range from big suppliers of all kinds of sound and lighting gear, such as Sam Ash Music (www.samash.com), to DJ specialty stores which give you a more focused selection, and often more personalized service. One such outlet is The Core Store (www.thecorestore.com), which recently debuted an all-new online catalog site. Due to sites like this one, it is now easier to find great deals without spending a lot of time searching. Check out the advertiser's index at the back of this Mobile Beat issue and also at www.mobilebeat.com for links to online dealers of DJ gear.

Another way to find the equipment you want online is to head to your favorite manufacturer's Web site and look for links to their authorized dealers.

Editor's note: We'll take an in-depth look at online buying options for DJs in the next issue of *Mobile Beat*, the annual Gear Book.

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American DJ	www.americandj.com	800-322-6337	3, 100
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Contact Iris Fox @ 516-771-5522 for Advertising information

Well, it happened about a year ago on a hot spring evening on top of a two-story building out here in West Texas. It was the hottest, driest weather we'd had in a while, with a record high of 106 degrees! Although heat rises, my clients had planned a birthday party out in the open air on a small office building's roof, I guess because there might be a cooler breeze as the sun set.

What actually happened was that the wind was really strong that day, coming in gusts like some legendary wind from the Sahara or something. Who said Chicago was the Windy City?! You just need to come out here and feel the dust scrape your skin a little to understand real wind.

Fortunately, the gig was only supposed to be three hours long. Some of the organizer's friends showed up early to bring up chips, soft drinks, and of course, alcohol. (How can I forget?!) I got my sound and lighting equipment set up, using only one light stand and a five-foot truss. My girlfriend, who insisted on coming along despite my protests, told me to use two stands or to tie the one down in some fashion. Did I listen? Of course not. I brushed off her advice and did it my way.

Well, the guests and then the birthday girl arrived and the party got under way. Over and over the wind would calm down and then gust back up. The chips, and napkins and stuff would then start blowing all over the place. Each time, the gusts seemed to be a little stronger than the last.

At first, the light truss shook back and forth just a little bit, so I didn't think much about it. Then all of a sudden, when my back was turned to the lights, a heavy gust of wind came swooping down. Down came the lights, missing my girlfriend by only a hair! And what did I do? I didn't check to see if she was okay, oh no. What would any other DJ do? I ran to check my lights—what else!?

The music went on as the darkness fell. Then to add a bit more chaos to the rooftop scene, one of the guests had a little too much cerveza (of course—what's a party without at least one overindulger?) and got to thinking that he was qualified as a ledge walker. Some of the other guests scrambled to get him off of the ledge and back on the roof before another stiff breeze took him off in the wrong direction. Fortunately for him, the wind had died down after sunset.

By that time, my three hours were up. To add insult to injury, one of the guests came over and offered me a whole $10 to keep playing. Wow! He said that he knew I wasn't a happy camper. I'll say. Not only was I worrying about a lighting repair bill but my girlfriend was fuming. After being brushed off and ignored in her moment of terror...let's just say the ride home was not fun!

I was totally distracted as I tore down my gear and trudged down the elevator. After the long, silent ride home, I couldn't sleep very well since I was still worrying about my lights. Daybreak couldn't come soon enough. The next day, when I inspected the damage, I was amazed. The lights still worked fine! Besides the dents that I worked out of them, they were ready for another gig. Maybe a gig on the ground and indoors. Party on y'all. •

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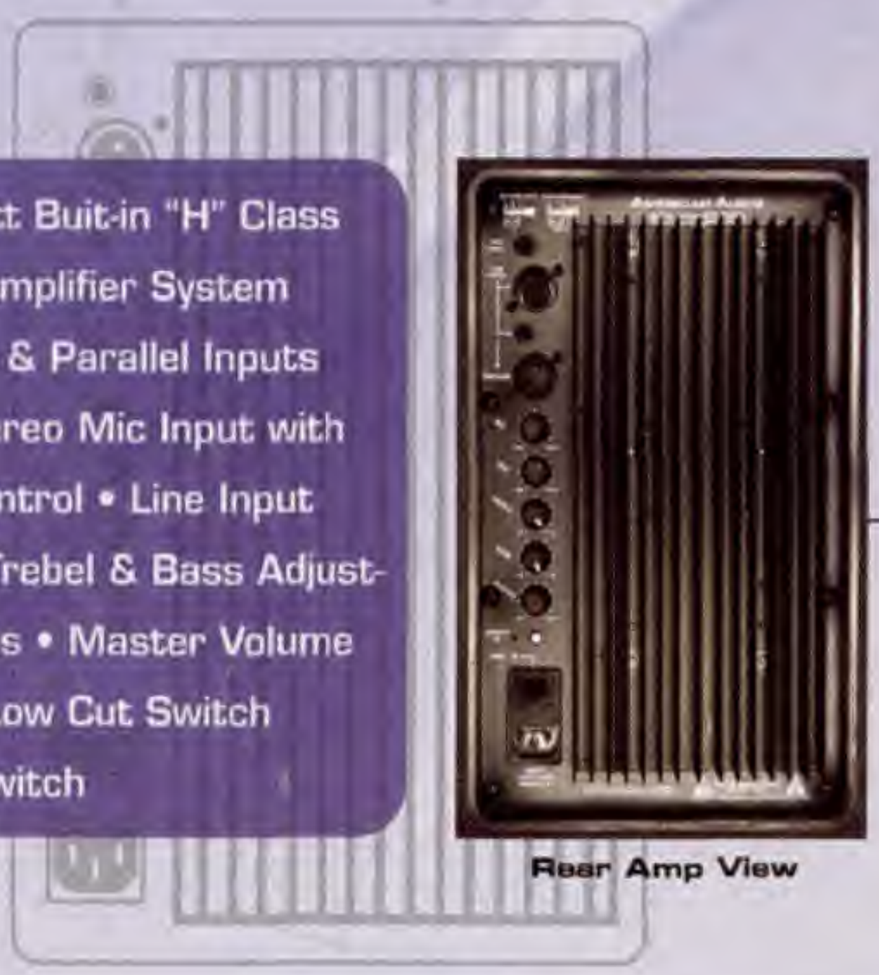

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